4258aa19

THE DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION unto LIFE

EXPLAINED and VINDICATED:

IN

FOUR SERMONS,

Preached to the

CHURCH of CHRIST, in *Brattle-Street*, *Boſton*, *New-England*; and publiſhed at their general Deſire.

WITH

Some additional PASSAGES and QUOTATIONS.

By WILLIAM COOPER,
One of the PASTORS of the ſaid Church.

With a PREFACE by the Senior Paſtors of BOSTON, and a Recommendation by ſome Divines in LONDON.

Doctrinam autem hanc de prædeſtinatione Dei æterna atque immutabili, eſſe neque ſupprimendam omnino, neque in ſcholis tantum inter doctos explicandam, ſed etiam in Pulpitis ad populum prædicandam; ſed ſobrie, hoc eſt, juxta ea tantum, quæ de hac in ſcripturis revelata ſunt; et prudenter, hoc eſt, ſermone ita attemperato, ut neque ad licentiam, neque ad deſperationem adducat, ſed ad ædificationem faciat, dico, atque doceo. ZANCH.

BOSTON Printed:
LONDON, Re-printed for E. and C. DILLY, in the Poultry, near the Manſion-Houſe. MDCCLXV.

116.

BRITISH MUSEUM

A RECOMMENDATORY

PREFACE.

THE Subject of the following *Treatiſe* is one of the Doctrines of the *Reformation*, embraced and owned by the *Proteſtant Churches*, when they threw off the Yoke and renounced the Errors of *Popery*; and is particularly the Doctrine, not only of the Church of *Scotland*, but of *England*, and *Ireland* as they are by Law eſtabliſhed. Yet it is embraced by *us*, as it was by the *Reformers* from *Popery*, becauſe we find it in our *Bible*. This it is that makes us *Predeſtinarians* and *Calviniſts*: For *Calvin* nor *Auguſtine*, nor any Names whatever, are any thing to us, but as they ſpeak from the *Holy Scriptures*. Theſe are our only *Oracles*. What we find there, we believe and profeſs, though incomprehenſible to our weak and ſhallow Minds, which are by no means the Meaſure of Truth. And we think we act a perfectly rational Part, as well as reverent before the HIGH GOD, the in-

finite *Intelligence*, in bowing our Understandings to his Revelations respecting Truth and Duty, even where we cannot answer every Scruple or *Objection*, for the reconciling *seeming Oppositions*.

Let none then entertain the Doctrine of *Election* with *Aversion*, Scoff and Ridicule; but with the lowest *Reverence* and highest *Adoration*. You will see with what *Reason* from the plain and *sincere Word* of God, through the following *Discourses*; which are, in our Judgment, as modest, strong and brief an Explanation and Vindication of this important Truth, as the *Reader* will be like to meet with; and well suited to convince *Gainsayers*, satisfy the *Doubting*, establish the *Wavering*, and stop the Mouths of *vain Talkers*, in contradiction to the *faithful Word*, which we are commanded to *hold fast* and *contend* for *.

We willingly take this Opportunity to testify our Concurrence with the *Author* in the Verity and Importance of this *Doctrine*; and our Satisfaction in his having preached and published these Discourses.

And it is our hearty Prayer to God that the Churches of the Reformation, and *our* Churches in particular, may be confirmed and established in this and other Doctrines of *Grace*, as they have been of Old

* Tit. i. 9, 10, 11.

Old delivered to them and received by them: And that as it is their indiſputable *Right* and Duty in their Choice of *Paſtors*, to take Heed to the Soundneſs of their *Principles*, as well as to their godly *Life* and edifying *Gifts*, they may ever do ſo in Fidelity to *God*, and Care of their own *Souls*, and thoſe of their Families.

That theſe *Diſcourſes* may be attended with a divine Bleſſing for theſe Ends, and that our dear *Brother* may long live a Bleſſing to the *Flock* over which the HOLY GHOST has made him an *Overſeer* to feed them in the Strength of the LORD GOD, and be continued a *burning Light* before all the Churches; and after a Life of great *Services* receive the *Rewards* of the *wiſe and faithful* Servant at the Coming of our LORD, are the Prayers of his *Brethren* and *Fellow-Servants* with him to theſe *Churches of* CHRIST.

Benjamin Colman,
Joſeph Sewall,
Thomas Prince,
Andrew Le Mercier,
John Webb.

Boſton, April 15, 1740.

RECOMMENDATION.

WE have perused the Rev. Mr. *Cooper*'s Sermons, on the Doctrine of *Predestination unto Life*, and most heartily concur with the *New-England* Divines, in recommending them to the Public; praying that the Churches of Christ, in our Days, may be established in this glorious Doctrine of Revelation, and that the Holy Spirit may accompany this very judicious Performance with his Blessing to every one who shall converse with it.

John Conder,
James Webb,
Richard Winter,
Thomas Towle,
Edward Hitchin,
Samuel Stennett.

London, March 20, 1765.

6 JY59

OF
Predeſtination unto Life.

SERMON I.

ROM. viii. 29, 30.

For whom he did fore-know, he alſo did predeſtinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firſt-born among many brethren.

Moreover, whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called; and whom he called, them he alſo juſtified; and whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified.

THE apoſtle having in the foregoing chapters of this epiſtle, explained the doctrine of *juſtification*, and preſſed the neceſſity of *ſanctification*, applies himſelf in this to the *conſolation* of the Lord's people: for the holy ſcriptures are not only *profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and inſtruction in righteouſneſs* (*a*), but *are written that we, through patience and com-*

fort

(*a*) 2 Tim. iii. 16.

fort of them, might have hope (b): And the miniſters of the word are appointed to be *helpers of the joy of them who through grace have believed (c)*. And, as a worthy expoſitor *(d)* ſays of this chapter, many of the people of God have found it a well-ſpring of comfort to their ſouls living and dying, and have *ſucked and been ſatisfied from theſe breaſts of conſolation (e)*, and *with joy drawn water out of theſe wells of ſalvation (f)*.

Having reckoned up many particular inſtances of the happineſs of true chriſtians, ſuch as a freedom from guilt and condemnation, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, a relation to God as his children, a title to future glory, and the concurrence of all providences to promote their ſpiritual and everlaſting good, he repreſents the ground of all theſe as laid in *God's eternal decree of election*, or *predeſtination unto life*, in the words that I have read: *For whom he did foreknow, them he alſo did predeſtinate*, &c. Here the order of the cauſes of our ſalvation is plainly ſet before us. Theſe words have been commonly called the golden chain of ſalvation; and ſuch a chain it is as cannot be broken: There are four links in it.

1. *Whom*

(b) Rom. xv. 4. *(c)* 2 Cor. i. 24. Acts xviii. 27. *(d)* Mr. *Henry*. *(e)* Iſa. lxvi. 11. *(f)* Ch. xii. 3.

1. *Whom he did fore-know, he alſo did predeſtinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.* Whom he did *fore-know.* This is the foundation upon which the whole frame of the ſurprizing work of man's redemption ſtands; the firſt thing to be conſidered in the ſcheme of ſalvation, upon which all the other parts follow, and with which they are inſeperably connected. It is here ſaid of a number of the children of men, as diſtinguiſhed from the reſt, that God has *fore-known* them. And this *fore-knowledge* implies choice; his having pitched upon them to be the objects on whom his redeeming grace ſhall be glorified. It is the ſame with that *everlaſting love*, wherewith he is ſaid to have loved his people, *Jer.* xxxi. 3. and means nothing leſs than his having *ſet them apart for himſelf*, Pſ. iv. 3. Words of *knowledge* in ſcripture often ſignify *affection* and *choice.* So God ſaid to *Moſes*, Exod. xxxiii. 17. *Thou haſt found grace in my ſight, and I know thee by name.* Where one expreſſion explains the other. So the apoſtle tells us, 1 Cor. viii. 3. That *if any man love God, the ſame is known of him.* A knowledge of favour and good-will muſt needs be here intended; and this previous and preparatory to any thing recommending and

lovely in the objects of it, as is plain from the manner in which the apostle speaks to the *Galatians*, ch. iv. 9. *Ye have known God, or rather are known of God.* On the other hand, we are told (*g*) our Saviour will say to some in the great day, *I never knew you*, i. e. I never approved and owned you; for both their persons and characters were well known to him †. The same word is rendered *fore-ordained*, in 1 Pet. i. 20. *Who* (i. e. Christ) *was verily* fore-ordained *before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.* God's *foreknowing* his people means nothing less than his eternal purpose to make them his friends and favourites. It must signify his determining to do them good, to call, justify, and sanctify them now, and glorify them hereafter.

Those

(*g*) Matt. vii. 23.

† *Duplex Dei decretum versatur circa electos, quorum alterum appellat Apostolus* προγνωσιν; *alterum* προορισμον, *predestinationem, sive electionem. Illa autem* πρόγνωσις, *sive prænotio, non est nudæ et simplicis notitiæ, sed approbationis, juxta usitatissimam scripturæ phrasiologiam.* Si quis diligit Deum, hic cognitus est ab eo. *Ecquid cognitione nuda, secluſa approbatione Dei? At sic cognoscunter etiam oves Dei.* Twiſſi *Vind. Grat. Lib.* 3. *Pag.* 259. *Etiam a* Piscatore *observatum* προγνωσιν *et* ευδοκιαν *procedem adhiberi.*

Thoſe whom God thus fore-knew, he did *predeſtinate to be conformed to the image of his Son*; to be like to Jeſus Chriſt in the temper of their minds, and actions of their lives. *This* takes in the whole work of ſanctification, of which Chriſt is the great pattern and example. Obſerve; It is not ſaid God fore-knew they *would* be conformed to the image of his Son, and ſo predeſtinated them, as ſome turn the ſenſe of the words. This cannot be the meaning of them; for this conformity to Chriſt is ſaid to be the thing they are predeſtinated *to*, and is made the reſult of this fore-knowledge, the effect of it, and not the cauſe. *Whom he did fore-know, them he did predeſtinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.* Being deſigned for glory and happineſs as the end, they are decreed to grace and holineſs as the way. For if there is a difference between *fore-knowledge* and *predeſtination*, it ſeems to be this, the former is the appointment of the *end*, the other of the *means* unto it. And they are predeſtinated to this conformity to the image of the Son of God, for the honour of Chriſt, whoſe glory is deſigned by the Father in the whole work of redemption: *That he might be the firſt-born among many brethren*; might have the honour of being the great pattern of ho-

lineſs, as well as the meritorious cauſe of our ſalvation, and ſo *in all things have the pre-eminence* (*h*).

2. Whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo *called*. Not only with the *external* call; ſo *many are called that were not choſen* (*i*), but with the *internal and effectual* call; which is the work of the ſpirit of God, whereby he convinces the conſcience of guilt and wrath, enlightens the underſtanding in the knowledge of Chriſt, bows the will, and inclines the heart, to embrace him as a Saviour, and obey him as a king and lord. "It is, ſays one, an effectual call from ſelf and earth, to God, and Chriſt, and heaven, as the end; from ſin and vanity, to grace and holineſs, and ſerioufneſs, as the way." This is the firſt *open* work of grace upon an elect perſon. And all whom God has from eternity predeſtinated to grace and glory, he does in his own way and time, thus effectually call.

3. Whom he called, them he alſo *juſtified*. Being in their effectual calling perſuaded and enabled to embrace the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as he is offered in the goſpel, they are through him abſolved from guilt, and accepted as righteous, are no longer looked upon and dealt with as

(*h*) Col. i. 18. (*i*) Matt. xx. 16.

as criminals, but owned and loved as friends and favourites.

4. Whom he juſtified, them he alſo *glorified*. The other privileges the elect of God are made partakers of in *time*, this of glorification, when *time ſhall be with them no more*; in the *ſoul* firſt at death, in *ſoul and body* united after the reſurrection, through a bleſſed never-ending eternity. To this they were deſigned in their election; for this they are prepared by their effectual calling, and the ſanctification of the ſpirit; that which hindreth is taken out of the way in their juſtification; and now, what can come between ſuch a ſoul and glory? *As for God his way is perfect (k)*; and in the glorification of all the elect, his deſign of love to them will have its full accompliſhment.

It is not my intention to ſpeak of all theſe privileges in the order in which they ſtand connected in our text, and I have but lately diſcourſed concerning two of them, *effectual calling* and *juſtification*. My preſent purpoſe therefore is, to treat only of that which is the ground of them all, and from which the reſt reſult, namely, *Election*, or *Predeſtination unto life*.

(k) Pſ. xviii. 30.

This is an illuſtrious and very precious doctrine of chriſtianity, ſo plainly revealed in the holy ſcriptures, that it is really ſtrange that any who profeſs to regulate their faith by the *bible* can deny it. Yet it is not only denied by many, but decried and reproached as unworthy of God, and prejudicial to religion; while others, who don't care to deny it, yet ſpeak of it as amongſt thoſe *myſterious*, *controverſial*, and *ſpeculative* points, which it is beſt not to meddle with, and ſo they would have it ſmothered in the church, and ſhut out of our ſermons.

True indeed this doctrine has its *myſteries*, and abſtruſe difficulties, when our minds try to enter far into it: ſo have other doctrines of the goſpel which yet we muſt *affirm conſtantly* (*l*), and endeavour to explain. Nor is it a doctrine *purely ſpeculative*; no, it has a powerful influence upon vital religion, and practical godlineſs——It has a direct tendency to advance the glory of God's grace in our ſalvation, to humble the pride of man, to engage the love, excite the praiſes, and conſtrain the obedience of God's children.

Our Saviour preached this doctrine; ſo did *his apoſtles* after him; and *the epiſtles*

(*l*) Titus iii. 8.

t'es to the churches are full of it: which plainly ſhews God would not have it locked up from his people. Should we therefore, who now preach the goſpel to you, paſs it over in ſilence, we ſhould not be able to ſay we have *declared* to you *the whole counſel of God (m)*. I humbly apprehend ſuch an omiſſion would be in effect to ſay, that Chriſt and his apoſtles preached, and the ſcriptures reveal a doctrine, which is found to be uſeleſs, if not hurtful, and therefore may not now be inſiſted on. And would not this be to reproach the Holy Spirit who has indited the ſcriptures, and to do an unſpeakable injury to revelation itſelf?

Beſides, we are verily perſuaded the edification and conſolation of the people of God, are not a little concerned in the opening and applying of this truth; and that many other doctrines of the goſpel cannot be rightly underſtood without it. I have therefore choſen this for my ſubject, out of the chapter that has been read in courſe this afternoon; ſenſible, I hope, that it is an awful and tremendous ſubject, and with an humble dependance on the Holy Spirit ſo to enlighten and aſſiſt me, as that the truth may not ſuffer, nor any ſoul be hurt, through an unſkilful management.

 Indeed,

(m) Acts xx. 27.

Indeed, let the ſubject be managed never ſo cautiouſly and ſcripturally, it can hardly be expected but it will be treated as the diſcourſes of the apoſtle himſelf were, of whom we read, Acts xix. 8, 9. that when *he went into the ſynagogue, and ſpake boldly for the ſpace of three months, diſputing and perſuading the things concerning the kingdom of God, divers were hardened, and believed not, but ſpake evil of that way before the multitude.* But *duty* is ours, and the *event* God's. We muſt always leave the ſucceſs of our preaching with him, and we are aſſured his word will *not return void*, but *will accompliſh the thing whereunto it is ſent (n).* If any ſhould be enraged and hardened by the things that are ſpoken, and *wreſt them to their own deſtruction (o)*, (which God forbid!) ſome, I truſt, may be confirmed, edified, and comforted. Yea, poſſibly theſe diſcourſes on election, may be bleſſed for the converſion of ſome of the elect of God, who may be awakened hereby to *give diligence to make their calling and election ſure (p).* And if ſo, *free-grace* will have the glory.

Though I ſhall ſtudy as much brevity as is conſiſtent with clearneſs, yet I cannot proſecute my deſign within the compaſs

(n) Iſa. lv. 11. (o) 2 Pet. iii. 16.
(p) 2 Pet. i. 10.

paſs of a ſingle ſermon; three or four diſcourſes, if God give us the opportunity for them, will be little enough for my purpoſe. And now, my hearers, let me crave, and, as I ſpeak in the name of Chriſt, I may demand your reverent and ſerious attention. Let me entreat you to lay aſide *prejudices*, if you have entertained any againſt this doctrine, and to *receive with meekneſs the engrafted word which is able to ſave your ſouls* (*q*). Let me deſire you to ſtop all *cenſures*, till I have finiſhed the ſubject, if, through the good hand of our God upon us, I may be allowed to do ſo. And let me further aſk you, before I proceed, to lift up your hearts to God, in ſome ſuch ſecret *petition*, as this, "Lord! if this doctrine be according to thy mind and will, ſuffer not my mind to be prejudiced againſt it; but help me to *receive it in the love of it* (*r*), and to improve it to all thoſe holy ſaving purpoſes for which thou haſt revealed it in thy word!" If any will not do thus, let me tell them, their minds are not rightly diſpoſed to hear, nor can they be looked upon to be *ſincere enquirers* after truth.

And now the method in which, through divine aſſiſtance, I would purſue the ſubject is this,

(*q*) James i. 21. (*r*) 2 Theſ. ii. 10.

I. I would repreſent and ſtate the truth, to ſhew you what we intend by the doctrine of election, or predeſtination unto life.

II. I will endeavour to prove it, and ſhew that the doctrine ſo repreſented and ſtated, is really the doctrine of the goſpel.

III. I ſhall attempt to anſwer the objections commonly brought againſt it, and to clear the doctrine of ſome difficulties wherewith its enemies have loaded it.

IV. I ſhall expoſe a few of the abſurdities which follow upon the denial of this doctrine, and mention ſome difficulties of which the contrary ſcheme labours, and with which they are embarraſſed who are on the other ſide of the queſtion.

V. I ſhall open the importance of the doctrine, and ſhew of what conſequence it is in the chriſtian ſcheme.

Laſtly, I ſhall endeavour to improve it to the great ends of ſerious religion, and practical godlineſs.

I. I am in the firſt place, to *repreſent* and *ſtate* the truth, and ſhew what we intend by the doctrine of *election*, or *predeſtination unto life*. And I chuſe to deſcribe it to you in the terms of the 17th among the famous *articles* of the church of *England*, which are *ſubſcribed* by all the

the *allowed clergy* of the nation. "*Predeſtination unto life*, ſays that *article*, is the everlaſting purpoſe of God, whereby before the foundation of the world was laid, he hath conſtantly decreed by his counſel, ſecret to us, to deliver from curſe and condemnation, thoſe whom he hath choſen in Chriſt Jeſus out of mankind, and to bring them by Chriſt unto everlaſting ſalvation, as veſſels made to honour." With this article agrees the *confeſſion of faith* ſet forth by the aſſembly of divines at *Weſtminſter*, and alſo their *catechiſms*, both the larger and ſhorter which we receive and teach. This truth ſo aſſerted in our public ſtandards, I ſhall explain in ſeveral diſtinct propoſitions.

1. *Predeſtination unto life*, reſpects only *ſome* of mankind. It cannot reſpect *all*, inaſmuch as all the children of men will not be finally ſaved. As there are evidently two ſorts of perſons in the world now, good and bad, ſo we are ſure from the word of God there will be found two very different ſorts of perſons at the great day, who will be dealt with after a very different manner; the righteous and the wicked: *Theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment, but the righteous into life eternal (s)*. And if all mankind are not finally ſaved, to be ſure they were not originally

(s) Matt. xxv. 46.

originally predeſtinated unto life; for the decree of God cannot be fruſtrated. He hath ſaid, *My counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will do all my pleaſure (t).* *There is a remnant*, ſays the apoſtle, *according to the election of grace*, Rom. 11. 5. and a remnant cannot be all. So in the 7th verſe, *The election hath obtained it, and the reſt were blinded.* The common diſtinction therefore of the elect, and non-elect, is juſt and neceſſary. When ſome are choſen out of many, *the reſt* muſt of conſequence be left, or the very notion of election is deſtroyed.

2. Theſe were *perſonally* choſen and pitched upon in the purpoſe and decree of God concerning them. Some will have the election the ſcripture ſpeaks of, to be only of *qualifications*, and not of *perſons*; but this is meer evaſion and trifling. The ſcripture plainly ſpeaks of an election of *perſons*, *whom* he did fore-know, ſays the text, *them* he did predeſtinate. Theſe our Saviour ſtiles *(u)* the *men* that the Father had given him out of the world, and their *names (w)* are ſaid to be written in the book of life from the foundation of the world.

3. Thoſe who are predeſtinated unto life and happineſs as the *end*, are alſo predeſtinated unto faith and holineſs as the

(t) Iſa. xlvi. 10. *(u)* John xvii. 6. *(w)* Rev. xvii. 8.

the *way*. When God chuſes perſons to an end, he alſo determines the means to that end. The ſame decree that predeſtinates any perſons to ſalvation, aſcertains the means of attaining that ſalvation. Theſe, according to the conſtitution of the goſpel, are *faith* and *holineſs*, and ſo they come under the ſame decree by which any are predeſtinated unto glory. The elect are not predeſtinated unto life, provided they perform the conditions of ſalvation, do believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and are holy, in which they are left entirely to their own will and choice. No; the predeſtination we are ſpeaking of, is no ſuch conditional uncertain thing as this makes it to be. The objects of it are by one determinate decree appointed to a *certain ſalvation*, which they ſhall obtain through faith and ſanctification, which are given them in conſequence of the decree. So the apoſtle tells the believing and ſanctified *Theſſalonians*, 2 ep. 2 ch. 13 ver. *God hath from the beginning choſen you to ſalvation, through ſanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, whereunto he called you by our goſpel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* And our text tells us, whom God fore-knew, he predeſtinated to be *conformed to the image of his Son*; in which is included the whole of

that

that work of ſanctification by which they are *made meet for the inheritance of the ſaints in light*, Col. i. 12.

4. Predeſtination unto life is *from everlaſting*. Therefore thoſe who are the objects of it, are ſaid to be choſen *before the foundation of the world*, Eph. iv. 1. before the very firſt dawn of time, *i. e.* from all eternity. Though there is no inward nor viſible difference between the elect and others, till the grace of God in their effectual calling in time makes it, yet the purpoſe of mercy concerning them was *before the mountains were ſettled, or the hills brought forth, while God had not yet made the earth, nor the fields, nor the higheſt part of the duſt of the world* (*x*). God's purpoſes are like himſelf, *eternal*; for, ſuch is his perfection that he comprehends all things referring to his creatures, together and at once, and no new thoughts or deſigns ever come into his mind, but what were there from eternity, in which there is no ſucceſſion. And, O the pleaſure! for any to follow God's thoughts concerning them ſo far back, as to apprehend him ſaying unto them, as to his church of old, *I have loved thee with an everlaſting love, therefore with loving-kindneſs have I drawn thee* (*y*).

5. It

(*x*) Prov. viii. 25, 26. (*y*) Jer. xxxi. 3.

5. It is a perfectly *free* and *ſovereign* act of God. His *diſtribution* of rewards and puniſhments at the laſt day will be founded in *juſtice*, but his *chuſing* ſome to make them the objects of his love, and *paſſing by* others, is founded in his *ſovereignity* and ſupremacy, whereby he is Lord of all, and accountable to none. *This* is what proud mortals are loth to ſtoop to, and apt to riſe up againſt, but let us be ſtruck into an awful adoring ſilence, by what the apoſtle ſays of this matter, in *Rom.* ix. ch. from the 14th ver. where the divine ſovereignty is both aſſerted and pleaded for: *What ſhall we ſay then? Is there unrighteouſneſs with God? God forbid. For he ſaith to Moſes, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compaſſion on whom I will have compaſſion. So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ſheweth mercy.— Thou wilt ſay then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath reſiſted his will? Nay, but O man, who art thou that replieſt againſt God? Shall the thing formed ſay to him that formed it, why haſt thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay of the ſame lump, to make one veſſel unto honour, and another unto diſhonour?* The great God was under no neceſſity to chuſe *any* of us unto

to eternal life. He would have been perfectly bleſſed himſelf, if our whole race had periſhed for ever. That he has choſen any is owing entirely to *the good pleaſure of his will (z)*. If he was pleaſed to make choice of any, he was under no neceſſity to pitch upon *ſuch* and *ſuch*. All the reaſon to be given is that, *Even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemeth good in thy ſight (a)!* There was nothing in the choſen remnant to move God to place his regards upon them before others. The foreſight of their faith and obedience was not the cauſe, for, as we have had occaſion to hint already, they were choſen *to* faith and obedience, and ſo it could not be *for* them; they are the effects of our election, and therefore cannot be the cauſes of it. God's fore-ſight of their faith and holineſs, pre-ſuppoſes his purpoſe to beſtow faith and holineſs on them, and this very purpoſe is a part of their election itſelf. The apoſtle therefore tells us, *Rom.* ix. 11. That *the purpoſe of God according to election, is not of works, but of him that calleth.*

6. It is *certain*, *infallible*, and *irrevocable*. So are *all* the decrees of God, and therefore *this* of predeſtination unto life. And if it were not ſo, the people of God could not take much comfort from

(z) Eph. i. 5. (a) Matt. xi. 26.

from it. God *will* never go back from his purpoſe to ſave his people, for *He is of one mind, and who can turn him? (b)*, What can induce him to alter his affection towards them? For ſuch is the perfection of his *knowledge*, that he can never be ſurpriſed by any ſudden new event, that may cauſe a change in his mind and will. He fore-ſaw all the ſins of his people, their undutiful and ungrateful carriage towards him through the whole courſe of their lives. Now, if the foreſight of them did not hinder his electing love in its riſe, can they fruſtrate its end, the bringing of them to glory?— And whatever they need to have wrought in them, or done for them, is *comprehended* in one and the ſame decree concerning them, and ſo ſhall be accompliſhed by the power of God. The *enemies*, that would hinder them, are indeed numerous and powerful; but *the Father that gave them to Chriſt is greater than all, and none ſhall pluck them out of his hand (c)*. Every thing will conſpire, *that the purpoſe of God according to election may ſtand*, Rom. ix. 11. The apoſtle ſpeaks peremptorily, 2 Tim. ii. 19. *The foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.*

7. It

(b) Job xxiii. 13. (c) John x. 29.

7. It is *in Jesus Christ* that any are predestinated unto life. This is expressly said, *Eph.* i. 4. *He*, i. e. the Father, *hath chosen us in him*, i. e. Christ, *before the foundation of the world.* Not that we are to suppose that the elect are chosen *for the sake* of Christ, or that he is the meritorious cause of their election. No; for though he has merited their salvation, purchased for them pardon, grace, and glory, he did not purchase their election, but they were considered *as elected* when they were given to Christ to redeem, and so election is not to be looked upon as a purchased blessing. But they are said to be *chosen in him*, because it is by virtue of that union with him, which is made in their effectual calling, that they come to be made partakers of those benefits to which they are chosen. The Lord Jesus Christ was in God's eternal purpose considered as the great Mediator by whom the salvation of his chosen people was to be brought about, and those ordained to salvation were given to him, that he might rightfully entitle them to that salvation, and successfully bring them to it. Thus he stands as the head of the elect, and they are said to be *chosen in him*; and he is spoken of as *set up from everlasting*, Prov. viii. 23. and is himself called God's *electi*,

elect, Iſa. xlii. 1. being himſelf choſen to be the Mediator and Redeemer by the ſame decree in which the elect among the children of men were choſen to ſalvation †.

Once more,

8thly, The laſt and higheſt *end* of this is the *manifeſtation of the divine glory*, in the ſalvation of ſome of the fallen human race. The divine glory is the moſt excellent end that can poſſibly be aimed at, and therefore an infinitely wiſe God cannot deſign any thing ſhort of it, as the great motive or inducement for him to act; and ſo what ever lower ends are deſigned

† Dr. *Goodwin* obſerves, from *Zanchy*, There is a great deal of difference between God's doing a thing *in Chriſt* and *through Chriſt*, εν χριστῳ and δια τον χριστον. When God is ſaid to do a thing *in* Chriſt, it uſually notes out ſome one of thoſe *imminent* acts of God towards us, that paſt between him and Chriſt for us, when they were alone, before we exiſted, and Chriſt was a common perſon repreſenting us all, and God gave all to Chriſt for us. So we read of *the grace that was given us in Chriſt Jeſus before the world was*. 2 Tim. 1. 9. But things that God doth *through* Chriſt, are uſually ſome *tranſient* acts of God towards us, or thoſe things which he actually performeth and applieth to us through Chriſt. So that though God *redeemeth through* Chriſt, *juſtifieth through* Chriſt, and *ſaveth through* Chriſt, yet he *chooſeth in* Chriſt; ſo that to *chuſe in him* is not all one with what the apoſtle ſaith, *He hath ordained us to obtain ſalvation* through *Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, 1 Theſſ. 5. 9. *Goodwin*'s Works, vol. 1. p. 58.

deſigned by him, they muſt all be reſolved into *this* as the principal: *For, of him, and through him, and to him are all things (d).* The two attributes which God hath a peculiar deſign at the diſplay and advancement of, in and by his reaſonable creatures, are his *grace* and his *juſtice*; the former in them that are ſaved, and the latter in them that periſh. This is plainly to be gathered from thoſe words of the apoſtle, Rom. ix. 22, 23. *What if God, willing to ſhew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-ſuffering the veſſels of wrath fitted to deſtruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the veſſels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?* The deſign then which lay at the bottom of God's decree of election, is the everlaſting diſplay of his ſovereign and glorious grace to the worlds of intellectual creatures which he has made. To this the ſcriptures refer it, and in this they ultimately reſolve it. Eph. i. 5, 6. *Having predeſtinated us to the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt, to himſelf, according to the good pleaſure of his will,* TO THE PRAISE OF THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE. And the ſame reaſon is given over again, in ch. ii. ver. 7. *That he might ſhew the exceeding riches of his grace, in*

(d) Rom. xi. 36.

in his kindneſs towards us, through Jeſus Chriſt.

Thus I have in ſeveral diſtinct propoſitions, *explained* and *ſtated* the truth before us. The time will not allow me to enter upon the ſecond thing propoſed, the *proof* of the point, or to ſhew that this doctrine as we have now repreſented it, is really the doctrine of the goſpel. I ſhall therefore conclude the preſent diſcourſe by adding a few words that have a tendency to give what has been already ſaid, an *enlivening* and *quickning* efficacy upon our hearts.

1. Predeſtination unto life is a thing *ſecret* to us. Who the perſons are that are the objects of it, God has not revealed: This is at preſent locked up within the divine breaſt. Yet we know,

2. It comprehends *a very great* and glorious *number*. Some have thought the elect among *mankind*, were to make up the number, and ſupply the room of *the fallen angels*. But this is an *extra-ſcriptural* conjecture; and for ought we know they may be *many more*. To be ſure they are a number ſufficient to give the brighteſt diſplay of the riches of free grace in, and a number worthy of that infinite price, the blood of the Son of God, which was laid down to redeem them. They are ſaid to be *many* in our text,

text, *Whom he did predeſtinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firſt born among* many *brethren.* And they are ſaid, in *Rev.* vii. 9. to be *a great multitude which no man can number.*

3. Some of all *ſorts, conditions,* and *characters,* are of this number. They are taken *out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,* and in the day when they ſhall be made up, ſhall be ſeen to come *from the eaſt and from the weſt, and from the north and from the ſouth (e).* If not *many* wiſe men after the fleſh, not *many* mighty, not *many* noble are choſen and called, yet *ſome* are, *(f).* And, *hearken my beloved brethren,* ſays the apoſtle *James, Hath not God choſen* out of *the poor of this world,* ſome to make them *rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom (g).* Yea, ſome who have been the *greateſt ſinners,* while in their unregenerate ſtate, are of this number. The apoſtle *Paul* tells the *Corinthians,* ſome of you were *fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, abuſers of yourſelves with mankind; thieves, covetous, drunkards, extortioners,* &c. *but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified, in the name of the*

(e) Rev. vii. 9. Luke xiii. 29. *(f)* 1 Cor. i. 26.
(g) James ii. 5.

the Lord Jeſus, and by the ſpirit of our God (h).

4. Some of them are brought forth *in every age* of the world; that ſo Chriſt may have *a ſeed to ſerve him (i)* in every generation to the end of time, and there may be ſome to ballance the world, even *a bleſſing in it (k)*, for whoſe ſake it ſhould not be deſtroyed.

5. Wherever the goſpel is preached there are *ſome* of theſe to be gathered in by it. It is more than probable that where God ſends a faithful miniſtry, and the goſpel is preached in the purity of it, he has a deſign to extend his ſaving grace to ſome among that people, whom he will by ſuch a miniſtry effectually call, and bring home to himſelf. So the apoſtle *Paul* was ſent to preach the goſpel in *Corinth*, becauſe God had *much people in that city*, Acts xviii. 10.

It follows then, that this is no ſuch diſcouraging doctrine as ſome would repreſent it. Since it is a ſecret with God who are predeſtinated unto life, and who are not; ſince the number of the elect is ſuch a great number, an innumerable multitude; ſince a part of them are brought forth in every age; ſince the greateſt

(*h*) 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. (*i*) Pſ. xxii. 30.
(*k*) Iſa. lxv. 8.

ſinners may be of this number, and none are excluded on account of any outward circumſtances; ſince the preaching of the goſpel is the appointed means of gathering them in, and wherever the goſpel is preached, we may ſuppoſe there are a number to be brought by it to that faith and holineſs, which is the predeſtinated way to eternal life; ſince, I ſay, theſe things are ſo, there is enough to prevent diſcouragement, to raiſe our hope of, and quicken our endeavours after ſalvation.

Inſtead then of riſing up againſt, and *quarrelling* with what we have now heard, let us turn it into a *prayer*; and there cannot be a better prayer after this ſermon, than that which the Holy Ghoſt has put into our mouth, *Pſal.* cvi. 4, 5. *Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou beareſt unto thy people! O viſit me with thy ſalvation! that I may ſee the good of thy chuſen; that I may rejoice with the gladneſs of thy nation; that I may glory with thine inheritance.*

OF

Predeſtination unto Life.

SERMON II.

ROM. viii. 29, 30.

For whom he did fore-know, he alſo did predeſtinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firſt-born among many brethren.

Moreover, whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called; and whom he called, them he alſo juſtified; and whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified.

THERE is an excellent and moſt wiſe *order* and connection in all that God brings to paſs, and this order ſo *ſettled* and joined together, that it can never be broken. The ſalvation of any of the children of fallen *Adam*, takes its riſe in the eternal counſel, free purpoſe, and electing love of God. Whom he did *fore-know*, and perſonally chuſe to ſalvation, them he did *predeſtinate* to all the means which

lead to that ſalvation. That which firſt follows predeſtination is *effectual calling*: *Whom he did predeſtinate*, ſays the text, *them he alſo called.* In his appointed time, by his word and Spirit he powerfully draws theſe to a thankful acceptance of, and firm reliance on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt as their Saviour, and an obedient *walking in him* (*l*) as the way to eternal life. Upon this enſues their *juſtification*: *Whom he called, them he alſo juſtified.* Being united to Chriſt in their effectual calling, they are through him abſolved from guilt, and accepted as righteous. After their calling, they are *in Chriſt Jeſus* (*m*), and *walk not after the fleſh but after the Spirit*, and ſo *no condemnation* belongs to them. Upon theſe will finally follow their *glorification* in heaven, after they have glorified God on earth, in which God's deſign of love to them, will have its full and eternal accompliſhment: *Whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified.*

It was not my deſign, when I began upon theſe words the laſt Lord's-day, to ſpeak of all theſe privileges in the order in which the text preſents them, but only of *that* which is the ground of them all, and from which the reſt reſult, namely, *election*, or *predeſtination unto life*: a plain and

(*l*) Col. ii. 6. (*m*) Rom. viii. 1.

and precious, but diſreliſhed and oppoſed truth of the goſpel. That I have taken *this* in hand, I am ſure is not from *a love to controverſy*, or fondneſs to oppoſe the ſchemes of others, but, I hope, from a ſincere deſire to *fulfil among you the miniſtry of the Lord Jeſus which I have received* (*n*) by *teſtifying the goſpel of the grace of God* (*o*) in all the parts of it. We truſt, my brethren, that *we* aim to *ſpeak, not as pleaſing men, but God* (*p*); and therefore we dare not baulk any truth, in its proper place and ſeaſon, becauſe it is unfaſhionable, oppoſed by *the wiſdom of the world* (*q*), or run down by popular outcry. Nor am I determined to this opinion by the prejudice of *education*, but becauſe after careful ſearches and reſearches, I am convinced of the *truth* of it, upon what appears to me to be the ſtrongeſt *evidence*; and the more I enquire into it, the more I ſee it to agree with *the holy ſcriptures*, and *the divine perfections*.

It was the buſineſs of the former diſcourſe to *explain* and *ſtate* the truth under conſideration. That which we are next to proceed to, is to *prove* and *confirm* it. The point then to be now eſtabliſhed is *this*: "That a certain, great

(*n*) Col. iv. 17. (*o*) Acts xx. 24. (*p*) 1 Theſ. ii. 4. (*q*) 1 Cor. iii. 19.

and glorious number, were elected by God, in his eternal counsel and purpose, from the rest of fallen mankind, to be in time effectually called and justified, in order to their being finally brought to eternal life and glory; and this out of his meer good pleasure, and for the praise of his glorious grace." And if the *truth* of this is once evinced to the conviction of a sober, honest, and serious mind, it may be hoped all *disgust* at it will cease, and every thought that *exalts itself against* (*r*) it will be suppressed.

I. In the first place, this truth must be established by the authority of the *sacred scriptures*. Hither we must refer the decision of *all* points in religion. Here we must repair to know of every *doctrine whether it be of God* (*s*). And, *What saith the scripture* (*t*) concerning this doctrine? Surely *he that runs may read* (*u*) *this* truth throughout the sacred pages.

Let me prepare the way to the more direct and positive proof I shall fetch from the *bible*, by first of all presenting you with some scripture instances of a *lower election*, of God's chusing and predestinating certain persons by name, and some

(*r*) 2 Cor. x. 5. (*s*) John vii. 17. (*t*) Rom. iv. 3. (*u*) Hab. ii. 2.

ſome of them long before they were born, to ſome ſpecial privileges, high honours, and ſignal ſervices in the world. And if *theſe* may not be taken for *poſitive* proof of that election we are treating of, yet they will ſerve greatly to *illuſtrate* it, and they are by very judicious divines looked upon as *examples* and patterns of it, inaſmuch as they plainly ſhew that the glorious God acts with reſpect to the children of men, with a *ſovereign liberty*, and in a way of diſcriminating favour; yea, many of them were inſtances of the *very election* we are now to exhibit the proof of, inaſmuch as it plainly appears by the account the ſcripture gives of them, that at the ſame time they were called to thoſe *external* privileges and *temporal* honours to which they were choſen, they were alſo called to the *ſpiritual* and *ſaving* bleſſings of the covenant of grace.

Thus *Abraham* was pitched upon to be the root and father of God's peculiar people, whom he would own and honour above all the nations of the world, and alſo to be one from whoſe loins the *Meſſiah* himſelf ſhould deſcend, *Gen.* xii. at the beginning, *Now the Lord had ſaid unto* Abraham, *Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's houſe, unto a land that I will ſhew thee, and I will make of thee a great*

nation, and I will bleſs thee, and make thy name great; and thou ſhalt be a bleſſing, and I will bleſs them that bleſs thee, and curſe them that curſe thee: and in thee ſhall all families of the earth be bleſſed. A high honour and advancement indeed! Yet he was *more* bleſſed in thoſe *ſpiritual* bleſſings which accompanied it. For he was at the ſame time made a juſtified believer, as we read, *Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteouſneſs* (*w*). He had a covenant-intereſt in and relation to God, and ſuch acceptance with the Almighty, as to be ſpoken of in this ſtile, *The friend of God* (*x*). And was there any thing in *Abraham*, to *move* God thus to prefer him above the reſt of his kindred? *No, in no wiſe* (*y*). It was all ſpecial grace and favour: For he was a ſtupid idolater, as well as the reſt of his family, and had ſerved God no better than they. The ſcripture repreſents God as acting herein with *a ſovereign liberty*, and by a free hand of mercy ſcatching him as *a brand out of the burning* (*z*). *Joſhua*, in God's name, declares *this* to the tribes of *Iſrael*, when they were aſſembled at *Shechem*, Joſh. xxiv. 2, 3. *Thus ſaith the Lord God of* Iſrael, *Your fathers dwelt on the other ſide*

(*w*) Rom iv. 3. (*x*) James ii. 23. (*y*) Rom. iii. 9. (*z*) Zach. iii. 2.

ſide of the flood in old time, even Terah *the father of* Abraham, *and the father of* Nachor, *and they ſerved other gods. And I* took *your father* Abraham *from the other ſide of the flood*, &c. For *this* God is adored long after in a ſolemn aſſembly of the children of *Iſrael*, Neh. ix. 7, 8. *Thou art the Lord the God, who didſt* chuſe Abram, *and broughteſt him forth out of* Ur *of the* Chaldees, *and gaveſt him the name of* Abraham, *and madeſt a covenant with him.* And when the prophet had occaſion to put that people in mind of their *original*, he does it in theſe terms, Iſa. li. 1, 2. *Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto* Abraham *your father, and unto* Sarah *that bare you, for I called him* alone *and bleſſed him.*

With the like *ſovereign liberty* he acted with reſpect to *Abraham*'s *ſeed*. He takes not *all* of them; *but in* Iſaac, ſaid he, *ſhall thy ſeed be called (a)*. Thus *Iſaac* was taken, and not *Iſhmael*. And though in anſwer to *Abraham*'s prayer for *Iſhmael*, *common* bleſſings are ſecured to him, yet *covenant*-bleſſings are reſerved for *Iſaac*, and appropriated to him, who was not yet born. *Gen.* xvii. 18, 19, 20, 21. *And* Abraham *ſaid unto God, O that*

(*a*) Gen. xxi. 12.

Iſhmael *might live before thee! And God ſaid,* Sarah, *thy wife ſhall bear thee a ſon indeed, and thou ſhalt call his name* Iſaac: *And I will eſtabliſh my covenant, with him for an everlaſting covenant, and with his ſeed after him. And as for* Iſhmael, *I have heard thee: Behold I have bleſſed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly, twelve princes ſhall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I eſtabliſh with* Iſaac, *whom* Sarah *ſhall bear unto thee at this ſet time in the next year.*

The like *ſovereignty* was exerciſed in the caſe of *Jacob* and *Eſau*, whoſe ſtory is recorded in the 25th ch. of *Geneſis*, and is recited and referred to by the apoſtle in the 9th ch. to the *Romans*, to illuſtrate and confirm the *truth* we are eſtabliſhing. They were both the ſons of *Iſaac* by one mother, and were twin-brethren: but there was a difference made between them by the divine counſel, before they were born. Both lay ſtruggling alike in their mother's womb, when it was ſaid, *the elder ſhall ſerve the younger* (*b*). And contrary to the intention of *Iſaac*, *Jacob* inherits the bleſſing. And though the good father bleſſed *Jacob* unwittingly, and by miſtake, yet, being afterwards convinced that he was the

(*b*) Gen. xxv. 22, 23.

the perſon for whom God deſigned the bleſſing, and on whoſe head it was to reſt by the divine determination, he acquieſced in the will of God, though it contradicted his own apprehenſion and affection, and was ſo far from reverſing what he had done, that he repeats it and paſſionately affirms it (*c*), *I have bleſſed him, yea and he ſhall be bleſſed.* And though *Jacob* acted a diſhoneſt and ſinful part, (of which he was afterwards no doubt made ſenſible, and brought to repentance for it, and ſo mercifully pardoned of the free grace of God through the promiſed *Meſſiah*) yet *Iſaac* in his bleſſing him, and not reverſing it, was under the conduct and influence of the divine Spirit, for we are told, *Heb.* xi. 20. *By faith* Iſaac *bleſſed* Jacob *and* Eſau *concerning things to come.* Here *Jacob* is put firſt by the apoſtle, though the younger, as having the precedency, and a better bleſſing. It is indeed a ſtrange ſtory! and if the deſign and meaning of it be enquired after, the apoſtle explains it thus, in *Romans* the 9th ch. 11. ver. *That the purpoſe of God according to election might ſtand, not of works, but of him that calleth,* i. e. ſays Mr. *Henry* on the place, "That this great truth may be eſtabliſhed, that God chuſeth ſome, and refuſeth others, as a

(*c*) Gen. xxvii. 33.

free agent, by his own abſolute and ſovereign will, diſpenſing his favours, or with-holding them as he pleaſeth."

And if we look to the *poſterity of Jacob*, the *Iſralites*, this people the Lord choſe in *Abraham*, four hundred years before he publicly owned them. They are expreſsly termed an *elect nation* (*d*), as being diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of the world; an *holy* (*e*), ſpecial, and *peculiar* (*f*) people unto God. When he *divided to the nations their inheritance, and ſeparated the ſons of* Adam, he took theſe for his own *portion, the lot of his inheritance* (*g*); though *the earth was his* (*h*) to chuſe *a people out of to his name* (*i*). And their hiſtory, from the time of their being firſt formed into a people, abundantly ſhews the ſpecial and peculiar love of God to them, above all other people in the world. Becauſe they were *precious in his ſight, and honourable*, therefore he *gave men for them, and people for their life*, when their preſervation and intereſts called for it, yea, he *gave* Egypt *for their ranſom*, Ethiopia *and* Seba *for them* (*k*). And why did the Lord take theſe? What was there to intitle them to this diſtinguiſhing honour? Did he chuſe them

(*d*) Iſa. xlv. 4. (*e*) Exod. xix. 6. (*f*) Deut. xiv. 2. (*g*) Deut. xxxii. 8, 9. (*h*) Pſal. xxiv. 1. (*i*) Acts xv. 14. (*k*) Iſa. xliii. 3, 4.

them becauſe they were a better people, or a greater nation? No ſuch matter. *Moſes* tells them, *Deut.* vii. 7. *The Lord did not ſet his love upon you, nor chuſe you becauſe ye were more in number than any people, for ye were the feweſt of all people.* And as their number was ſmall, ſo their diſpoſition was bad and their manners ill. They were a peeviſh and humourſome people, froward and perverſe, obſtinate and incorrigible, ſtrangely addicted to the idolatries of *Egypt*, and other nations. The Lord foreſaw this before he choſe them, for he tells them by the prophet *Iſa* xlviii. 8, 4, 5. *I knew that thou wouldeſt deal very treacherouſly, and waſt called a tranſgreſſor from the womb. I knew that thou waſt obſtinate, thy neck an iron ſinew, and thy brow braſs. I have even from the beginning declared it unto thee, before it came to paſs I ſhewed it thee.* Therefore the only reaſon aſſigned why God ſet his love upon them as he did, is this, *becauſe he loved them (l)*: All was from free favour, to manifeſt his ſovereignty, and becauſe he had his elect among them, in a ſtill higher and more appropriate ſenſe. So God ſaid to *Moſes*, *Exod.* xxxiii. 19. *I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will ſhew mercy to whom I will ſhew mercy.*

If

(*l*) Deut. vii. 8.

If we go on to name *David*, he, the moſt unlikely among the ſons of *Jeſſe*, was choſen to be the king of *Iſrael*. He was the youngeſt of the family, employed in the meaneſt ſervice, to keep the ſheep, ſcarce reckoned as one of the family, for he was not brought in amongſt the reſt, when *Samuel* was ſent to anoint *him whom the Lord had choſen*. But when all the other had been refuſed as they paſſed before *Samuel*, though ſeveral of them ſtood fair in the eye of the prophet, and *David* was at laſt fetched, as ſoon as he appeared the Lord ſaid, *Ariſe, anoint him, for this is he* (*m*). The *peculiarity* of the divine choice appearing in this inſtance, the *Pſalmiſt* ſings of, *Pſal.* lxxviii. 70, 71. *He choſe* David *alſo his ſervant, and took him from among the ſheep-folds, from following the ewes great with young, he brought him to feed* Jacob *his people, and* Iſrael *his inheritance.*

Another remarkable inſtance was *Cyrus*. This man was deſigned in the purpoſe of God for great and noble work, to deſtroy a mighty monarchy, releaſe God's people out of captivity, and rebuild his temple. It was foretold what great things ſhould be done by him, more than an hundred years before he was born; and he was *called by his name* too, and this not

(*m*) 1 Sam. xvi. 12.

not from any worthineſs in himſelf, for it is ſaid he *did not* ſo much as *know the Lord.* This famous man and his wondrous actions, were propheſied of ſo long before hand, by the prophet *Iſaiah*, in the latter part of the 44th, and the beginning of the 45th chapters of his book. *Thus ſaith the Lord, that confirmeth the word of his ſervant, and performeth the counſel of his meſſengers, that ſaith to* Jeruſalem, *thou ſhalt be inhabited, and to the cities of* Judah, *ye ſhall be built, and I will raiſe up the decayed places thereof. That ſaith of* Cyrus, *He is my ſhepherd, and ſhall perform all my pleaſure, even ſaying to* Jeruſalem, *thou ſhalt be built, and to the temple, thy foundation ſhall be laid. Thus ſaith the Lord to his anointed, to* Cyrus, *whoſe right hand I have holden, to ſubdue nations before him, and I will looſe the loins of kings to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates ſhall not be ſhut. I will go before thee, and make the crooked places ſtraight; I will break in pieces the gates of braſs, and cut in ſunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treaſures of darkneſs, and hidden riches of ſecret places, that thou mayſt know that I the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of* Iſrael. *For* Jacob *my ſervants ſake, and* Iſrael *mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name, I have ſirnamed thee, though thou haſt not known me.*

The

The prophet *Jeremy* was likewiſe *ordained* to great things before he was born. To him God ſaid, *Jer.* i. 5. *Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou cameſt forth out of the womb I ſanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.*

And of the apoſtle *Paul* the Lord ſaid, *He is a choſen veſſel unto me, to bear my name before the* Gentiles, *and kings, and the children of* Iſrael, Acts ix. 15. He, afterwards ſpeaking of his converſion, and call to the apoſtleſhip, aſcribes them to the powerful grace of God, in conſequence of his previous *purpoſe* and foreordination. *Gal.* i. 15, 16. *It pleaſed God, who ſeparated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Heathen.* Now, ſhall we ſay that theſe, and other ſuch inſtances on ſacred record, are to be conſidered only as *hiſtorical* relations? Surely *that* would be too low and narrow a meaning for them. According to the apoſtle's reaſoning in the 9th chap. to the *Romans*, in the caſes of *Iſaac* and *Iſhmael*, *Jacob* and *Eſau*, it is very plain they were intended for the illuſtrating the methods of God's grace towards particular *perſons*. And, I think, it is juſtly inferred and argued, "If there be an election perſonal unto things of a

temporal

temporal concernment, and that ſo long before ſome of the perſons were in being, how much more unto things of a *ſpiritual* and eternal concernment? And if the Lord did not look out of himſelf for the moving conſiderations on which he ſelected theſe perſons to their ſeveral privileges and honours, much leſs can election unto life be founded in any deſervings of the creature. From the leſs to the greater is a ſcriptural way of arguing, and in many caſes proves ſtrongly *.

But I proceed to exhibit that more *direct* and *poſitive proof* which the *Bible* furniſhes us with. There we read abundantly of an election which can be underſtood of no other than a *perſonal* election unto eternal life as the end, and unto Chriſt, and faith, and holineſs as the way. And though we find this doctrine in the *Old-Teſtament*, in the writings of *Moſes* and the *prophets*, as appears from ſome of the ſcriptures we have had occaſion already to mention, and from others which I might turn you to (*n*); yet I ſhall here look only into the *New-Teſtament*, where the

* Mr. *Cole* in his diſcourſe on the ſovereignty of God.

(*n*) 1 Kings xix. 18. compared with Rom. xi. 2, 3, 4, 5. Iſai. i. 9. compared with Rom. ix. 29. Iſai. x. 22, 23. compared with Rom. ix. 27, 28. Jer. xviii. 6. compared with Rom. ix. 20, 21. Pſal. cvi. 4, 5. Iſai. lxv. 8, 9. Jer. l. 20. Mic. vii. 18.

the *myſteries of godlineſs* (*o*) are more manifeſt, and things that have been *hid from ages and generations* (*p*) are diſcovered.

I ſhall not diſtribute the ſcriptures I ſhall mention into any other *order* than that which the *Bible* preſents them in: And ſo we muſt begin with ſome paſſages in the diſcourſes of our bleſſed SAVIOUR himſelf, by which it will appear that HE taught this very doctrine; He, who is *the faithful and true witneſs* (*q*), and well knew what doctrine was ſafe and profitable to teach, as well as true. I think the firſt paſſage we meet with to our purpoſe, if we read the evangeliſts in the order of an *harmony*, is in the ſermon which Chriſt preached to the people at *Nazareth*, *Luke* iv. 25, 26, 27. *But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in* Iſrael *in the days of* Elias, *when the heaven was ſhut up three years and ſix months, when great famine was in all the land, but unto none of them was* Elias *ſent, ſave unto* Sarepta, *a city of* Zidon, *unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in* Iſrael *in the time of* Eliſeus *the prophet, and none of them were cleanſed ſave* Naaman *the* Syrian. The manifeſt deſign of our Saviour in theſe two examples, is to aſſert the *ſovereignty* of God in the diſpenſations of his favour; and to let them, know

(*o*) 1 Tim. iii. 6 (*p*) Col. i. 26. (*q*) Rev. iii. 14

know, that as the prophet *Elijah* was ſent to relieve a favourite widow, and the prophet *Eliſha* to heal a diſtinguiſhed leper, ſo he came with a commiſſion and deſign to ſave, not all, but a *ſelect* number, of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*. And it ſeems they could not bear this doctrine even in thoſe days, for it follows, *And all they in the ſynagogue, when they heard theſe things, were filled with wrath, and roſe up, and thruſt him out of the city, and led him to the brow of a hill, that they might caſt him down headlong*. But this did not cauſe him to *ſuppreſs* the truth, or *wave* it, when he had *occaſion* to mention it, whether in his *prayers* or *ſermons*.—— At a time when he had been reproving and threatning the places where he had preached the goſpel, for their impenitence and unbelief, he comforts himſelf with the thoughts that there was a *number* upon whom the word had come with a ſaving light and power, purſuant to the *purpoſe* and *pleaſure* of the Father, whom he adores as the proprietor and diſpoſer of all ſpiritual and heavenly bleſſings, and whoſe *free* diſpenſation of his favours, he moſt heartily approvesof, and acquieſces in *Matt.* xi. 25, 26. *At that time Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, becauſe thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe*

wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes. Even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight! At another time when his diſciples expreſſed themſelves ſomething ſurprized that he taught the people in parables, without an expoſition to let them into the meaning of what he delivered to them, explaining things only to their ſmall and ſelect company in a private way, and deſired a reaſon of this his conduct; he anſwers them in ſuch a manner as to let them know, that ſpiritual light and knowledge, a ſaving diſcovery of goſpel-truths was *given* to *ſome*, and to *themſelves* in particular, in a way of *free ſpecial* diſtinguiſhing favour, but *with-held* from *others* according to God's wiſe, holy and ſovereign *pleaſure: He ſaid unto them, Becauſe it is given to you to know the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given*, Matt. xiii. 10, 11.——So when, on another occaſion, there were ſome who complained againſt the *method* he obſerved in the beſtowment of his bounty and mercy, he, in reply to them, vindicates his own *right* to diſpoſe of the bleſſings of the goſpel as he ſaw meet, becauſe he was the *ſovereign* proprietor thereof, and none could *claim* what he did not ſee cauſe to give, *Matt.* xx. 15, 16. *Is it not lawful for me to do*

what

what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, becauſe I am good? So the laſt ſhall be firſt, and the firſt laſt; for many be called, but few choſen. And when, a little after this, *the mother of* Zebedee's *children*, who had entertained the notion of a *temporal* kingdom which Chriſt was about to ſet up, came to him with that ambitious requeſt, that her *two ſons* might be his chief favourites and miniſters, *might ſit the one on his right hand, the other on his left in his kingdom*; in his anſwer to her he not only lets her know ſhe was miſtaken about the *nature* of his kingdom, which was not of this world, but that the donatives and honours of it, were long ſince *ſettled*, and were to be diſpoſed of by him to thoſe perſons for whom they were *deſigned* in the Father's counſel and purpoſe, and to no other. He ſaid, *To ſit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but* to thoſe *for whom it is prepared of my Father* (*r*). In the 13th ch. of *Mark*, our Saviour foretells the unperallelled diſtreſs and deſolation which would come upon the *Jews*, when the *Roman* armies ſhould make a deſcent upon *Judea*, and inveſt *Jeruſalem*, the holy city, whoſe power and rage would be ſo great as to make even a full end of that people, if the merciful providence of God did not interpoſe to reſtrain

(*r*) Matt. xx. 20—23.

reſtrain and limit them. Such a remembrance of mercy in the midſt of this judgment he gives them the promiſe of, but withal lets them know this favour would be ſhewn them, for the ſake of *a choſen number*; that ſuch of his elect "as "were then living in their ſins, and "thoſe of them who were to deſcend "from the loins of ſome of that age, "might be brought to faith and repen-"tance; and that they, together with "the already converted, might be pre-"ſerved for the propagation of his king-"dom in the world; the 19th and 20th verſes, *For in thoſe days ſhall be affliction, ſuch as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created, unto this time. And except the Lord had ſhortned thoſe days, no fleſh ſhould be ſaved; but for the* elects' ſake *whom he hath choſen, he hath ſhortned the days.* Our Saviour goes on in the next verſes, to foretel that *falſe chriſts* and *falſe prophets* would ariſe at that time, ſo plauſible in their pretences, ſo artful in their managements, and ſo induſtrious to ſeduce, that they would deceive and draw away *the very elect* themſelves, were not their perſeverance in the faith ſecured by the purpoſe of God concerning them, and their ſeduction and overthrow thereby rendered *impoſſible.*——In the 6th ch. of

of *John*, we have our bleſſed Lord complaining of the unbelief of the generality of thoſe who had both ſeen his miracles and heard his preaching, yet comforting himſelf, and refreſhing others who wiſhed to ſee his ſaving work go on, with the thought, that *a goodly number* would after all believe and be ſaved, even *as many as the Father had given to him* for his charge and care. The 36, 37, 38, and 39th verſes; *I have ſaid to you, that ye alſo have ſeen me, and believe not. All that the Father hath given me, ſhall come to me: for I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that ſent me. And this is the Father's will which hath ſent me, that of all which he hath given me, I ſhould loſe nothing, but ſhould raiſe it up again at the laſt day.* In the 10th ch. he ſpeaks of his own *redemption*, as being of juſt the ſame extent with the Father's *election*; repreſents himſelf as under a neceſſity to bring all that belonged to this election, into his church, and a participation of the bleſſings of the goſpel, by the influences of his ſpirit accompanying his word, becauſe he could not otherwiſe diſcharge his truſt, and fulfil the engagements he had entered into; and ſpeaks of the continued unbelief of thoſe to whom he preached the goſpel, as a ſign they were not included

included in this number. The 15, 16, 26, 27, 28 and 29th verſes; *I lay down my life for the ſheep. And other ſheep I have which are not of this fold; them alſo I muſt bring, and they ſhall hear my voice; and there ſhall be one fold, and one Shepherd. Ye believe not, becauſe ye are not of my ſheep, as I ſaid unto you. My ſheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life, and they ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand*; whoſe power is alſo engaged for their preſervation, and from whom I am never ſeparated in council and working. It is true, the calling of the *Gentiles* into the church is referred to, in what is ſaid in the 16th verſe; but to reſtrain all that our Saviour has here ſaid to the calling of *them* as a body, appears to be very contrary to the *run* of his diſcourſe, wherein by the ſheep which he ſpeaks of as belonging to himſelf in the quality of a ſhepherd, is evidently meant *a ſelect number* out of the *Jews* and *Gentiles* both. In the 13th ch. of this ſame goſpel, our Saviour giving an intimation to his diſciples of the damning ſin of *Judas* juſt before he committed it, makes this diſtinction between him

him and the reſt of the apoſtles, *I ſpeak not of you all*; *I know whom I have choſen*, verſe 18. The choice muſt reſer to *ſalvation*, and not to the apoſtleſhip, for to this he was choſen, as much as the other apoſtles; wherefore he ſays in another place, *Have not I choſen you twelve, and one of you is a devil*?* John vi. 70.—Our Saviour, as he began, ſo he ends his miniſtry with this doctrine: For his parting prayer with his diſciples, juſt before he left them and the world, is full of it. It is recorded in the 17th ch. of *John*'s goſpel; and plainly ſhews that as in his mediatorial undertaking, he was concerned with a peculiar number given him by way of diſtinction out of mankind in general, ſo theſe only were intereſted in this interceſſory prayer, as thoſe to whom the bleſſings he aſked for and claimed, did rightfully belong. *Theſe*

* It is manifeſt to me, that Chriſt here means a more peculiar and beneficial election, than to the office of apoſtles; for he had choſen them all to this. But he here ſpeaks of a diſcriminating choice of ſome of them, which did not extend to them all, and particularly to *Judas:* And to ſhew that his knowing whom he had choſen, related not to their temper and diſpoſition, but to the perſons themſelves, he did not ſay, I know, ποιους, what their qualities are, but, ους, the perſons, whom I have choſen.

Guyse's excellent paraphraſe on *John* xiii. 18. In the margin.

words ſpake Jeſus, and lift up his eyes to heaven, and ſaid, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son alſo may glorify thee. As thou haſt given him power over all fleſh, that he ſhould give eternal life to as many as thou haſt given him. I have manifeſted thy name unto the men which thou gaveſt me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me, and they have kept thy word. I have given unto them the words which thou gaveſt me, and they have received them, and have known ſurely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didſt ſend me. I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou haſt given me, for they are thine. Keep through thy own name, thoſe whom thon haſt given me. Sanctify them through thy truth. Let them be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee. Father, I will that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou haſt given me. And that none might reſtrain this prayer to *the apoſtles*, our Saviour ſhews how extenſive it was in the intention of it; that it included all that in every age ſhould obtain the *faith of* God's *elect*, verſe 20. *Neither pray I for theſe alone, but for them alſo which ſhall believe on me through their word.*——Thus far we have quoted

ted the words of Chriſt himſelf, the great *prophet* of the church; who came from the *boſom of the Father (s)*, the ſeat of his counſels as well as love, and therefore was well able to reveal the ſecrets of heaven to men upon earth; and *was faithful to him that appointed him, as alſo* Moſes *was faithful in all his houſe (t)*.

The *diſciples* whom our Lord ſent forth to preach under the ſpecial guidance of his Spirit; and the *apoſtles* who were trained up for the work of the miniſtry under the *perſonal inſtructions* of their divine Maſter, or were taught the goſpel they were to preach by *immediate revelation* from Chriſt himſelf; *they* taught this doctrine after him without the leaſt heſitation, and preached and wrote in the ſame ſtrain with him.

The evangeliſt *Luke*, (who was very probably one of the ſeventy diſciples, and with good reaſon is ſuppoſed to have wrote the narrative of *the Acts of the Apoſtles*, as well as the third of the four goſpels which bears his name) giving an account of the ſucceſs of the goſpel among the *Gentiles*, upon the *Jews* refuſal of it, makes the work of ſaving faith in thoſe in whom it was wrought, to be the reſult of that act of grace which we

(s) John i. 18. (t) Heb. iii. 2.

call predeſtination. Acts xiii. 48. *And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were* ORDAINED *unto eternal life believed.*

The apoſtle *Paul*, the great Doctor of the *Gentiles*, was a zealous aſſertor of this truth in almoſt all his *epiſtles*. When he writes to thoſe in *Rome* who were *beloved of God*, and *called to be ſaints* (*u*), he takes care to let them know that the ground of all the privileges they enjoyed in time, and of that happineſs they hoped for through eternity, was laid in God's free electing love. The 8th ch. at the 28th verſe. *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called* ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE. Then follow the words of our Text. *For whom he did fore-know, he alſo did predeſtinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firſt-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called; and whom he called, them he alſo juſtified; and whom he juſtified them he alſo glorified.* And to ſhew the immutability of this electing love of God, and that nothing ſhould hinder the objects of it from being put into the actual poſſeſſion of the grace and

(*u*) Rom. i. 7.

and glory to which they were deſigned, he leads them into that noble triumph with which the chapter ends. *Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? —Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt?—I am perſuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.*——In the 9th chapter he goes on to *illuſtrate* this doctrine from particular *inſtances*, and to *vindicate* it againſt ſome objections. *When* Rebecca *had conceived* twins *by our father* Iſaac, *it was ſaid unto her, the elder ſhall ſerve the younger; as it is written,* Jacob *have I loved, but* Eſau *have I hated; though the children being not yet born, had done neither good nor evil: That the purpoſe of God according to election might ſtand, not of works, but of him that calleth. What ſhall we ſay then? Is there unrighteouſneſs with God? God forbid. For he ſaith to* Moſes, *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compaſſion on whom I will have compaſſion. For the ſcripture ſaith to* Pharaoh, *Even for this ſame purpoſe have I raiſed thee up, that I might ſhew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Thou will ſay then*

unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath reſiſted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that replieſt againſt God? Shall the thing formed ſay to him that formed it, Why haſt thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay of the ſame lump, to make one veſſel unto honour, and another unto diſhonour? Some will reply to this, and ſay, It is not a perſonal but a *national* preference which is here ſpoken of; and the apoſtle does not refer to *Jacob* and *Eſau* in their ſingle capacity, or to the ſpiritual and everlaſting ſtate of either of them; but intends only their *poſterity*, and the difference made between the *Iſraelites* and the *Edomites*, in the *external* diſpenſations of providence; which he mentions to juſtify God, and ſilence the *Jews* from complaining, though they were caſt off, and the *Gentiles* called in their room. But though *Jacob* and *Eſau* are here ſpoken of with reſpect to their deſcendents, it does not follow that they are not to be perſonally conſidered alſo; eſpecially ſince *Pharaoh* is mentioned, and brought in as an inſtance with them. And whoever attends to the manner of the apoſtle's diſcourſe, I think muſt ſee that he has ſomething higher than any temporal concerns of men in his eye all along, and refers to their ſpiritual and everlaſting ſtate. Why elſe does he draw

that

that inference from it in the 16th verſe; *So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ſheweth mercy?* And ſpeak in the 22d and 23d verſes, of God's *ſhewing his wrath, and making his power known, on the veſſels of wrath fitted to deſtruction, whom* he here *endured with much long-ſuffering*; and his diſplaying *the riches of his glory, on the veſſels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?* In the 11th chapter he further vindicates the divine conduct in caſting off the *Jews*, and reconciles it both with the promiſe made unto the fathers, and with the divine goodneſs in general: And he does this by aſſerting *an election of grace* among that people, which would certainly take effect. The rejection, he ſays, was not *total.* They were caſt off indeed, but not *all.* Though the body of that people remained in unbelief, there was a *choſen remnant* among them, that obtained righteouſneſs and life by faith in Jeſus Chriſt, of which number he reckons himſelf to be *one*; and he ſuggeſts too that it was a *larger number* than ſome might imagine, as was the number of the choſen, preſerved and faithful, in the days of *Elias.* From the 1ſt to the 7th verſe. *I ſay then, hath God caſt away his people? God forbid. For I alſo am an Iſraelite of the ſeed of* Abraham, *of the tribe of* Benjamin. *God hath not caſt*

away his people which he FORE KNEW. *Wot ye not what the ſcripture ſaith of* Elias? *How he maketh interceſſion to God againſt* Iſrael, *ſaying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they ſeek my life. But what ſaith the anſwer of God unto him? I have reſerved to myſelf ſeven thouſand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of* Baal. *Even ſo then at this time alſo there is a* REMNANT ACCORDING TO THE ELECTION OF GRACE. *And if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwiſe grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwiſe work is no more work. What then?* Iſrael *hath not obtained that which he ſeeketh for; but* THE ELECTION HATH OBTAINED IT, *and the reſt were blinded.*

He begins his epiſtle to the *Epheſians* with a moſt devout and ſolemn thankſgiving to God, for thoſe ſpiritual bleſſings wherewith believers are bleſſed; and not only mentions their election and predeſtination as *one*, but as the ſecret *ſpring* from whence all the reſt flow, ch. 1. ver. 3, 4, 5, 6. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly things in Chriſt:* ACCORDING AS HE HATH CHOSEN US IN HIM, BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, *that we ſhould*

ſhould be holy, and without blame before him in love: Having predeſtinated us to the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt to himſelf, according to the good pleaſure of his will, to the praiſe of the glory of his grace. Surely this muſt contain much more than their being appointed to *the outward privileges* of the church-ſtate of the goſpel; for though this is a great favour, yet all who are thus favoured cannot be ſaid to be *bleſſed with ALL ſpiritual bleſſings in Chriſt*, as thoſe here ſpoken of are ſaid to be. The apoſtle leaves us at no loſs about the perſons here intended; for he calls them in the 1ſt verſe, the *ſaints at* Epheſus, *and faithful in Chriſt Jeſus*; and they are farther deſcribed in the 7th verſe, as having *redemption through his blood, even the forgiveneſs of ſins*; which things cannot be ſaid to belong to thoſe who are no more than viſible or nominal chriſtians.

To the *Theſſalonians* he writes, as *knowing their election of God*, becauſe the goſpel had come to them, *not in word only but in power*; which plainly ſhews ſomething more is intended than their election to the enjoyment of the goſpel; for its coming in *word only* would have been a ſufficient proof of that, 1 ep. i. 4, 5. This is farther explained in his 2d epiſtle, the 2d chap. at the 13th and 14th

verſes; where the goſpel is conſidered as the means of their attaining that ſalvation which they are ſaid to be choſen to; for he ſays to them, *God hath, from the beginning, choſen you to ſalvation, through ſanctification of the ſpirit, and belief of the truth; whereunto he called you by our goſpel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*—Hitherto our quotations have been out of thoſe epiſtles of *Paul* which are directed to *churches*. He alſo wrote ſome to *particular perſons*; as to *Timothy* his *own ſon in the faith (w)*, to direct him how to diſcharge his office as an *evangeliſt (x)*: Him he charges to *hold faſt the form of ſound words (y), which he had heard from himſelf*; and we find this to be ſome of thoſe ſound words, a part of the chriſtian doctrine in which he inſtituted this young divine; that ſalvation takes its riſe from the free grace, and eternal purpoſe of God in Jeſus Chriſt. 2 ep. 1 ch. 9th ver. *Who hath ſaved us, and called us with an holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpoſe and grace which was given us in Chriſt Jeſus before the world began.* That he might be willing to do and ſuffer any thing, to promote the ſalvation of others, he propoſes to him his own example, in the 2d ch. the

(w) 1 Tim. i. 2. (x) 2 Tim. iv. 5. (y) 2 Tim. i. 13.

the 10th ver. *I endure all things for the* ELECTS SAKE, *that they may obtain the ſalvation in Chriſt Jeſus*, to which they are deſigned. And leſt he ſhould be diſcouraged when corrupt teachers ſhould advance dangerous and deſtructive opinions, as *Hymeneus* and *Philetus* had done, and the faith of many nominal chriſtians ſhould be *overthrown* by them, he lets him know, That as many as God had ſet apart for himſelf, would be preſerved through faith unto ſalvation. ver 19. *Nevertheleſs the foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, the Lord knoweth them that are his.* Nor does he leave this out of the ſcheme of principles he taught *Titus*, another *evangeliſt*; whoſe buſineſs was to water the churches planted by the apoſtles, and to ſtrengthen and carry on the work which *they* had begun. In the preface of his epiſtle to him, he ſpeaks of himſelf, as *a ſervant of God, and an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godlineſs: in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promiſed before the world began.* In the body of the epiſtle he charges him to *ſpeak the things which become ſound doctrine*; and not only to inculcate the duties of practical religion, but to ſet forth the free grace of God in

man's ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt; and to urge obedience from this peculiar motive of the goſpel, the end of Chriſt's death, *Who gave himſelf for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify to himſelf a* PECULIAR PEOPLE, who ſhould be *zealous of good works.* Tit. 1 ch. 1, 2. ver. 2 ch. 1. 14 ver. 3 ch. 4, 5, 6. ver.

There was a union of the other apoſtles with *Paul* in teaching this doctrine. It is more than implied in thoſe words of *James*, (ch. i. ver. 18.) *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth*, &c. His *own will* there, means nothing leſs than his purpoſed grace: It is the ſame with what the apoſtle *Paul* calls *his good-pleaſure, which he hath purpoſed in himſelf (z).* And when he is warning againſt a partial regarding the rich, and deſpiſing the poor, he ſhews this to be very contrary to God's method in diſpenſing ſpiritual favours. The 2d. ch. 5th. ver. *Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God* CHOSEN *the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promiſed to them that love him?*

The apoſtle *Peter* will not leave this ſubject untouched. Writing to the chriſtians, driven by perſecution from their own country into places where they were *ſtrangers,*

(z) Eph. i. 9.

ſtrangers, he addreſſes them in this ſtile, ELECT *according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through ſanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt (a)*. He diſtinguiſhes between them and others in the next, ch. at the 8th and 9th verſes: Others, he ſays, took *offence* at Chriſt, and *ſtumbled* at his word, *being diſobedient, whereunto alſo they were appointed:* but theſe were *a* CHOSEN GENERATION, *a* PECULIAR PEOPLE, *to ſhew forth the praiſes of him, who hath called them out of darkneſs into his marvellous light.* And in his next epiſtle, the 1ſt ch. the 10th ver. he exhorts them to *give diligence to make their calling*, and therein their *election ſure*; i. e. ſure to themſelves, with reſpect to their own comfortable knowledge of it, as it was already ſure with reſpect to the decree and purpoſe of God.

The teſtimonies ſhall finiſh with *John*, as his writings cloſe the book of God. He was eſpecially the diſciple of love, and his *epiſtles* as well as his goſpel, breath the electing love of God. In his firſt epiſtle, the 4th ch. the 19th ver. he makes the antecedent eternal love of God to *us*, not only the incentive, but the *riſe* and *ſpring* of the believer's love to

(a) 1 Pet. i. 1, 2.

to *him: We love him becauſe he firſt loved us.* And he inſcribes his ſecond epiſtle to an honourable matron, whom he calls *the elect lady*; not only a choice one, but one choſen of God.———Nor is the book of the *Revelation which Jeſus Chriſt made to him (b)* ſilent about this truth. There we are told, *That all that dwell in the earth ſhall worſhip the beaſt*, and be deceived by *Satan*, either in doctrine or practice, to their perdition, excepting thoſe *whoſe names are written in the Lamb's book of life from the foundation of the world*; 13th ch. 8 ver. 17th ch. 8 ver. And in the 14th ver. of the laſt-mentioned chapter, the *followers of the Lamb* have this deſcription and character given of them, they *are called, and choſen, and faithful.* Finally, we are told in the 21ſt ch. 27th ver. Who ſhall gain admiſſion into *the new* Jeruſalem *(c)*, *the* Jeruſalem *which is above (d)*, *the city of the living God (e)*; *that there ſhall in no wiſe enter any thing that defileth, neither whatſoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie*; *but* THEY WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THE LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE. This expreſſion frequently occurs in the ſacred ſtile. Of ſome *particular ſaints* we read, *Phil* iv. 3. their *names are in the book of life.*

(b) Rev. i. 1. *(c)* Rev. iii. 12. *(d)* Gal. iv. 26. *(e)* Heb. xii. 22.

life. And *the whole body* of them are ſtiled, *Heb.* xii. 23. *The church of the firſt-born written in heaven.* All which places refer to the common uſage among men, of keeping books of record, in which are entered the names of perſons admitted into their community, and all elections to offices among them: And ſo in this metaphorical way of ſpeaking, the ſcripture repreſents the great diſcriminating favour of *eternal election.*

It appears from all, that the doctrine we are treating of, is no ſcattered, ſingle, or independent article; but runs along with the *ſtream* of the *Bible.* "We have "not this truth as *the ſmall drop of a* "*bucket* (*f*), but as *the ſound of many* "*waters* (*g*)." If *theſe* texts do not mean what we are maintaining, to *me* they mean nothing at all. And however one or two of them may be artfully evaded, or turned to another ſenſe by *the ſlight* of any;† yet they who deny our doctrine muſt fight with *an exceeding great army* (*h*) of ſcriptures, and contend with *Moſes* and the *prophets*, CHRIST

(*f*) Iſa. xl. 15. (*g*) Rev. i. 15. (*h*) Ezek. xxxvii. 10.

† If any would ſee a number of the ſcriptures we have mentioned reſcued from the ſtrange and unnatural interpretations of *Hammond*, *Whitby*, and others; let them conſult Doctor *Edwards*'s Veritas Redux, and the late Doctor *Ridgely*'s Body of Divinity.

CHRIST and his *apoſtles*. And thus we ſee what we have aſſerted, ſtrongly eſtabliſhed by the *authority of the holy ſcriptures*.

II. We may argue this truth from the *divine perfections*; particularly from the infinite *wiſdom*, and certain *fore-knowledge* of God.

1. From the infinite *wiſdom* of God, in conjunction with his *power*. Whatever God does, he muſt be ſuppoſed to have before *determined* to do: this muſt be allowed, or elſe it would argue him defective in *wiſdom*. And whatever he determines to do he muſt *accompliſh*, or it would argue him defective in *power*. I find this thought ſo well purſued by a late rational and ſound *divine*, ‡ that I will take the liberty to uſe his words, with but little variation.

"It muſt be allowed, that whatever perfection or excellency is to be found in any creature, the ſame muſt be eſſential to the moſt high God, and that in the moſt eminent and tranſcendent degree. For if every creature derives its being from God, as the firſt cauſe, then no creature can poſſibly be poſſeſſed of any excellency, but what muſt, in the higheſt and moſt abſolute ſenſe, belong to God. Now

‡ The Rev. Mr. *Sladen*.

Now no one can deny that it is an excellency in any creature to be wiſe and powerful; wiſe to lay a ſcheme of what he intends to do, and powerful to perform and accompliſh what he deſigns. For a rational being to ſet about a work, without firſt forming in his mind a *model* of what he intends to purſue, is to diſcover a defect of wiſdom, as not to be able to *accompliſh* the plan he hath laid down, bewrays a want of power.——Theſe premiſes being granted, which indeed cannot be denied, it muſt follow, that whatever the great God does he deſigned to do, and whatever he deſigned to do he does. For to ſuppoſe God to perform any work which he did not before deſign to perform, is to charge him with a degree of folly, and with acting below an intelligent agent, as to ſuppoſe him to deſign a thing which he does not effect, is to tax him with impotence. If then it is an inſtance of the wiſdom and power of man, firſt to deſign a work, and then to perfect it, the great God, who is infinite in both theſe perfections, muſt deſign what he effects, and effect what he deſigns. To this deciſion of *reaſon* the ſacred *ſcriptures* bear their teſtimony in the fulleſt and ſtrongeſt manner. With how much majeſty does the great God deliver himſelf in thoſe words! *Iſa.* xlvi. 9, 10.

9, 10. *I am God, and there is none elſe; I am God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times, the things that are not yet done, ſaying, My counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will do all my pleaſure.* To apply *this* to the great work of fallen man's redemption. Either God actually ſaves all men, or he does not; if he does, he muſt have deſigned it; if he does not, it is plain he never deſigned it. All that God deſigned to ſave, he ſaves; but he actually ſaves ſome only, therefore he deſigned only to ſave ſome of fallen *Adam*'s children. Now, if we conſider God as infinite in wiſdom, and of almighty power, there cannot be a more rational way of arguing, than from his acts to his deſigns."

2. The very *fore-knowledge* of God argues the ſame thing. That *known to God are all his works from the beginning (i)*, will be eaſily granted. Few, if any among us, are diſpoſed to deny this, that God did from all eternity *fore-know* who ſhould be ſaved. He muſt then fore-know that the requiſite qualifications to ſalvation ſhould be found in them; that they would *repent* and *believe*, and *obey the goſpel*, for none can be ſaved without theſe. And ſince the ſcripture

(i) Acts xv. 18.

ſcripture is plain that theſe are God's *gift*, of *his working* wherever they are found, he cannot be ſaid to have foreknown that theſe would ſo repent and believe, without an unalterable *determination* in his own mind to *beſtow* theſe ſaving graces on *them in particular*. Therefore, fore-knowledge and predeſtination are linked together in our text, *Whom he did fore-know, them he did predeſtinate*. I take *this* argument to be concluſive. It is that upon which the great Doctor *Twiſs* mainly reſts the cauſe, in his learned defence of this truth againſt the oppoſers of his day. And it was this that convinced the celebrated Dr. *South*, and brought him into the principles called *Calvinian*. It will not be foreign to my purpoſe, and poſſibly it may more than inform and pleaſe ſome, if I ſhould inſert a ſhort account of that matter into this diſcourſe. I have it then from very good authority ‖, that this eminent perſon, ſometime after the reſtoration, being in company at *Oxford* with ſeveral perſons of note, and among the reſt with Mr. *Thomas Gilbert*, who was afterwards one of the *ejected* miniſters, they fell into a converſation about the *Arminian* points. And although it was more than

‖ Dr. *Calamy*'s continuation of the account of the *ſilenced* miniſters, Vol I. p. 146.

than ſuſpected that Dr. *South*, who fell in with the new conformity, did alſo incline to the new divinity of that time, yet upon Mr. *Gilbert*'s aſſerting that the *Predeſtination* of the *Calviniſts* did neceſſarily follow upon the *Preſcience* of the *Arminians*, the Doctor preſently engaged that if he would make that out, he would never be an *Arminian* ſo long as he lived. Mr. *Gilbert* immediately undertook it, and made good his aſſertion to the ſatisfaction of thoſe preſent; and the *Doctor* himſelf was ſo convinced, as to continue to the laſt a very zealous aſſertor of *the reformed doctrine* againſt its various oppoſers.——And thus the truth, we are maintaining. may be argued from the *divine perfections.*

III. It may alſo be argued from the *diſpenſations of Providence and grace*; in giving the goſpel to ſome people, and not to others; and in bleſſing the preaching of it for ſaving good to ſome who enjoy it, and not to others.

1. In *giving the goſpel to ſome* and not to others. In order to compleat the ſalvation of men, the redemption purchaſed muſt be *applied*; and in order to this application there are *means* appointed and made neceſſary by God's inſtitution: theſe are the word and ordinances of the goſpel

goſpel. For, as ſays the apoſtle, *Rom.* x. 14. *How ſhall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how ſhall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? And how ſhall they hear without a preacher?* Now the goſpel of ſalvation is ſent to *ſome* places, and not to others; and this by a *ſpecial providence.* Not only the doctrine, but the *journeys* and *travels* of the apoſtles, were under the direction of the ſpirit of God. Acts xvi. 6, 7. *Now when they were gone throughout* Phrygia, *and the region of* Galatia, *and were forbidden of the Holy Ghoſt to preach the word in* Aſia, *after they were come to* Myſia, *they aſſayed to go into* Bithynia; *but the ſpirit ſuffered them not.* Accordingly when the apoſtle *Paul* was preaching the goſpel at *Antioch*, he told the people of that place *Acts* xiii. 26. *Men and brethren, to you is the word of this ſalvation* SENT. Not ſo much brought by us as *ſent* by God. And this diſpoſition of providence cannot be accounted for but by *an election of grace* to be gathered in from among ſuch a people. *This* was given as the reaſon why *Paul* was ſent to preach the goſpel at *Corinth*, Acts xviii. 9, 10. *Then ſpake the Lord to* Paul *in the night by a viſion, ſaying, Be not afraid, but ſpeak, and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee, and no man*

ſhall

ſhall hurt theee; *for I* HAVE MUCH PEOPLE *in this city*. And *ſo* the preaching of the goſpel in other *Gentile* places is accounted for, Acts xv. 12, 14. James *anſwered ſaying*, *Ye have heard how God hath viſited the* Gentiles, *to take out of them a people for his name.*

2. In *bleſſing the means of grace* for ſaving good to *ſome* who enjoy them, and not to others. *The wind blows where it liſteth* (*k*,—and the holy ſpirit works by the miniſtry of the word, *to will and to do, of his own good pleaſure* (*l*). *One* is awakened, convinced, *pricked in the heart* (*m*) by a ſermon; *another* in the ſame ſeat, under the ſame ſermon, feels nothing. Sometimes the moſt *unlikely* are taken and effectually called, while others are left: and this after many years delay and diſcouragement, and no hopeful proſpect, but the contrary. Some out of *wicked families* are converted; others, after a ſtrict and religious education, become vile and profligate. What *different ſucceſs* hath the goſpel at ſome times, and in ſome places, and at different times in the *ſame* place! though the ſame meſſage, and the ſame preacher. Is there not an open *diſplay* of the ſovereignty of divine grace in all this? Surely the converſion of ſinners is

(*k*) John iii. 8. (*l*) Phil. ii. 13. (*m*) Acts ii. 37.

is *according to his purpoſe (n)*, as to the *ſubjects* themſelves, and alſo as to the time and ſeaſon of their change, and the means and method by which it is accompliſhed.

Once more,

IV. Such an election as we are treating of, is *neceſſary to ſecure to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt what he purchaſed by his death.* It would be very diſhonourable to ſuppoſe that Chriſt undertook the great and difficult work of man's redemption, that he came into our world, ſuffered and died, upon *an uncertainty* what the effect of his redemption would be; for this is plainly to make him act below a wiſe intelligent agent. This could no ways be *aſcertained* but by a divine fore-ordination; for otherwiſe it muſt be left to turn upon the corrupt fallacious will of man. If men were left to themſelves, ſuch is their *impotency* to what is good, in their preſent fallen ſtate, and ſuch a *ſtrong bias* are they under to the world and ſin, they would never comply with the terms of ſalvation; and ſo muſt fall ſhort of it after the purchaſe of it was made. Therefore *a ſpecial number* were choſen, and given to Chriſt, with reſpect to whom the Father engaged, that they ſhould be brought to believe on him, and

(n) Rom. viii. 28.

and be *a ſeed to ſerve him (o)* in this world, and through his merits obtain everlaſting bleſſedneſs in the world to come. We are told in the revelation which God hath made to us of *the hidden myſtery which God ordained before the world unto our glory (p)*, that the ſucceſs of his redeeming work was *aſcertained* to our Redeemer, in an inviolable contract, upon his engaging in the great and glorious deſign. Iſa. liii. 10, 11, 12. *When thou ſhalt make his ſoul an offering for ſin, he ſhall ſee his ſeed: the pleaſure of the Lord ſhall proſper in his hand. He ſhall ſee of the travail of his ſoul and be ſatisfied: By his knowledge ſhall my righteous ſervant juſtify many. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he ſhall divide the ſpoil with the ſtrong: becauſe he hath poured out his ſoul unto death.* It was upon the aſſurance our bleſſed Saviour had given him in this contract, that he ſpoke thoſe words, John vi. 37. *All that the Father giveth me,* SHALL *come to me.* Thus I have confirmed the truth we are maintaining, by what I take to be direct ſcripture proof, and ſolid argument agreeable to ſcripture. And if the truth is once well eſtabliſhed, there is the leſs need to regard the *objections* brought againſt it. Yet, I hope, through divine

(o) Pſal. xxii. 30. (p) 1 Cor. ii. 7.

divine aſſiſtance, in the next diſcourſe to *vindicate* this doctrine, in ſome meaſure, from the charges brought againſt it, as if it argued unrighteouſneſs in God, diſcouraged perſons from uſing the means of ſalvation, tended to deſpair, &c.

In the mean time, let what we have now heard cauſe us humbly to bow down before the throne of the divine ſovereignty, and awfully to adore in the apoſtle's language, *Rom.* xi. from the 33d verſe. *O the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! how unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counſellor? Or who hath firſt given to him, and it ſhall be recompenſed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever.* AMEN.

OF

Predeſtination unto Life.

SERMON III.

ROM. viii. 30.

Moreover, whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called; and whom he called, them he alſo juſtified; and whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified.

THESE words have been the foundation of two diſcourſes already, upon *this* illuſtrious doctrine of Chriſtianity, That a certain number were ſelected by God, in his eternal counſel and purpoſe, from the reſt of fallen mankind, to be in time effectually called, ſanctified and juſtified, in order to their being finally brought to eternal life and glory; and this out of his meer good pleaſure, and for the praiſe of his glorious grace.

This truth has been *explained* and ſtated in ſeveral propoſitions. It has alſo been *confirmed* and eſtabliſhed by poſitive

poſitive ſcripture-proof, and by ſome arguments drawn from the ſcriptures. That which we are to proceed to at this time is,

III. To attempt to clear this truth from ſome *miſrepreſentations* made of it; and to give an anſwer to the *objections* commonly brought againſt it.

Here I would firſt of all obſerve to you, We ſhould not *diſown* or *relinquiſh* a doctrine we have been taught, becauſe of ſome objections raiſed againſt it, or difficulties attending it: For there is no one truth in all the *Bible*, though never ſo plainly laid down, but the corrupt, proud, and aſpiring mind of man, has formed ſome objections againſt it, and ſtarted ſome difficulties about it. And if we cannot quite maſter all the difficulties, and reconcile every thing that ſeems contradictory, we muſt not therefore withhold our aſſent, if the thing itſelf is *expreſly revealed* in ſcripture, or *neceſſarily inferred* from it. We are indiſpenſably obliged to believe *whatever* God has revealed, whether it is obvious to our reaſon, and agrees with our preconceived opinions, or not. If we can but ſatisfy ourſelves the ſcripture *aſſerts* ſuch a doctrine, the obſcurity, difficulty, and harſhneſs, which ſeem to attend it, muſt not ſtumble or offend us. For

theſe are things which are to be received upon the credit of him that reveals them; and we do not yield that *obedience of faith* (*q*) which the goſpel requires, unleſs our *underſtandings* ſubmit to a revealed truth, as readily as our *wills* comply with a commanded duty.

It is *Scripture* and not *Reaſon*, that is the rule of faith: For we are incompetent judges of revealed truths, not only on account of the narrowneſs of our capacities, but becauſe of that *blindneſs of mind* (*r*) which is the conſequence of our fallen ſtate.

Nor yet is the *unſearchableneſs* of a doctrine revealed in ſcripture, a ſufficient reaſon why we ſhould forbear all *inquiry into it*, or *diſcourſe about it*. What we may not pretend to ſearch out to perfection, or to explain the *modus* of, we may yet know and ſpeak ſo much of, as to ſubſerve the great ends of religion. And if it is not the object of inquiry, nor a fit ſubject of diſcourſe, to what end is it revealed at all? We are ſoon loſt in the *perfections of the divine nature*, as well as in the *doctrine of the decrees*; yet *they* muſt not be let alone, if we would teach people what they are to believe concerning God.

Though

(*q*) Rom. xvi. 26. (*r*) Eph. iv. 18. 2 Cor. iii. 14.

Though there are bounds ſet about the holy mount, and to *break through to gaze (s)*, is dangerous, and may be fatal; yet, keeping a proper diſtance, we may allowably take a view of what is preſented before us; and without affecting to be *wiſe above what is written (t)*, we may ſafely venture to go into a myſterious ſubject as far as the ſcripture leads us, *comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual (u)*: And by *going into the ſanctuary of God*, we may gain ſome ſatisfaction about what is otherwiſe *too painful for us (x)*.

Having ſaid this by way of *premiſe*, I come directly to what we propoſed, to vindicate the preſent truth from ſome of the miſrepreſentations made of it, and to anſwer ſome objections made againſt it.

1. To vindicate it from ſome *miſrepreſentations* For a diſtinction is always to be made between the objections to which *a truth may be liable*, and the *miſrepreſentations* which are ignorantly or maliciouſly made of it. Some greatly miſrepreſent this doctrine, and ſtate it in ſuch a manner as we are far from allowing, but utterly diſown and reject as well as themſelves. Thus,

1. Some repreſent the doctrine of election as God's ordaining to ſave ſome par-

(s) Exod. xix. 21. (t) 1 Cor. iv. 6. (u) 1 Cor. ii. 13.
(x) Pſal. lxxiii. 16. 17.

particular perſons *let them live how they will.*

But no ſuch election as this was ever aſſerted by *us*. The ſcripture knows no ſuch election, and *we* are far from maintaining it. The *ſame* decree that deſigns any perſons to ſalvation, aſcertains the *means* for the obtaining that ſalvation: Theſe are faith and holineſs. God hath choſen us to ſalvation *through ſanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth* (*y*). And the elect of God *are predeſtinated to be conformed to the image of his Son* (*z*, which takes in the whole work of ſanctification. And therefore we never ſaid, that if a perſon was elected he might be ſaved, however he ordered his life; for this would be to ſeparate what God has indiſſolubly connected, and to deſtroy a part of the decree itſelf.

2. Another miſrepreſentation is, when any ſpeak as if the decree of God was *the reaſon why men did continue in ſin and unbelief.*

Give me leave to reply to this in the words of another *. "Indeed the imme-
"diate reaſon why any repent and be-
"lieve to eternal life, is becauſe *the ex-*
"*exceeding*

(*y*) 2 Theſ. ii. 13. (*z*) Rom. viii. 29.

* Dr. *Ridgley*, by way of reply to Dr. *Whitby*. See his Body of Divinity, Vol. I. p. 230.

" *ceeding greatneſs of God's power* (*a*) is
" exerciſed towards them, whereby he
" works repentance and faith in them;
" and the reaſon of his exerting this
" power to work theſe ſaving graces in
" them, is becauſe he has determined to
" do it; and ſo it is the execution of
" his purpoſe. But it does not follow
" from hence, that the reaſon why
" others do not repent and believe is,
" becauſe they were not ordained to eter-
" nal life. It is true, their not being
" ordained to eternal life, or God's not
" having purpoſed to ſave them, is the
" reaſon why he does not exert that power
" which is neceſſary to work repentance
" and faith in them; and impenitence
" and unbelief will certainly be the con-
" ſequence hereof; but the immediate
" ſpring and cauſe of impenitence and
" unbelief, is the corruption and per-
" verſeneſs of human nature, which is
" chargeable on none but man himſelf.
" We muſt certainly diſtinguiſh between
" impenitence and unbelief, their being
" the *conſequent* of God's not working
" repentance and faith, and their being
" the *effect* hereof. If God withholds
" his grace from ſome, to whom he
" was not obliged to give it, and they
" continue in ſin, this is to be aſſigned

(*a*) Eph. i. 19.

" only to that wicked propenſity of na-
" ture, which inclines us to ſin, and
" not to the divine efficiency;" for the decreee enforces no man to ſin, as we ſhall have occaſion to ſhew hereafter.

3. Another ſuch groſs miſrepreſentation of this doctrine is, when any ſpeak as if the aſſerters of it held, that men are damned *by virtue of the decree*, without any conſideration of their *ſin* and *miſcarriages*.

But *this* was never ſaid by the moſt zealous aſſerters of election and reprobation. We do indeed affirm, that God of his meer ſovereignty choſe ſome to everlaſting life, and paſſed by others, without any conſideration had to the good works of the former, or the evil deeds of the latter; but then a diſtinction is made between bare *non-electing* and the *decree of condemnation*. *This*, being a thing more poſitive in the nature of it, muſt be with a view to ſin committed, and from the fore-ſight of it. The objects of the decree of condemnation muſt be, ſome way or other, obnoxious to juſtice, that the righteouſneſs of God may be entirely clear in the judgment of intellectual creatures. For though a *favour* may be placed on one to whom it is not due, while it is withheld from another that has no claim to it, without any ſhadow

of

of in juſtice; yet, *puniſhment* cannot righteouſly be inflicted on one that no way deſerves it; and *eternal* puniſhment cannot be deſerved, if no ſin is to be charged.

Among the *Calviniſtical* Divines of the laſt century, Doctor *Twiſs* was one of prime note; and, though in the *ſupra-lapſarian ſcheme*, he declares himſelf in the words following †; "That in no moment of time or reaſon doth God ordain any man to damnation, before the conſideration of ſin. Every one that is damned is damned for his ſins, and that wilfully committed, and conmaciouſly continued by them that come to ripe years."

Doctor *Edwards*, another ſtrenuous and learned defender of predeſtination, ſays *, "It is a true propoſition, that God never decreed to make any creature everlaſtingly miſerable, who by his voluntary tranſgreſſion of the divine laws, did not deſerve it. To damn, being an act of punitive juſtice, ſuppoſes a fault, implies ſome demerit. *Tribulation and anguiſh to every ſoul of man that worketh evil*, Rom. ii. 9. *All are under ſin*, Rom.

† In his *Riches of God's Love*, wrote againſt Mr. *Hord*, 2nd part, page 50.

In his *Veritas Redux*, page 163, 164.

" iii. 9. *That every mouth may be ſtop-*
" *ped, and all the world may become*
" *guilty before God*, ver. 19. There-
" fore the penal decree hath reſpect to
" this."

And our venerable *Willard** ſpeaks the ſame language, when he ſays, " God intended to damn none but for " ſin. Damnation is not an act of " meer ſovereignty, but of relative " juſtice. God damns none meerly " becauſe he will damn them, but be- " cauſe they have brought it upon " themſelves. As in Jer. ii. 17. *Haſt* " *thou not procured this unto thyſelf, in* " *that thou heſt forſaken the Lord thy* " *God?* Sin therefore is the only " cauſe of mens deſtruction. It is true " there is an infallibility of conſequence " upon reprobation, that all who are " under that decree will die; but they " do not die becauſe they were repro- " bated, but becauſe they ſinned. And " were it not ſo, revenging juſtice " would not be manifeſted in this. " For juſtice appears in rewarding men " according to their doings, judging " by the law which they are under. " That juſtice then may take place, it " muſt appear that the man really de- " ſerves the penalty inflicted on him.

" Now

* In his *Expoſitory Lectures*, Page 270.

" Now this deſert ariſeth from the na-
" ture and merit of ſin: The man then
" muſt be a ſinner before he can be
" juſtly damned; and if he be ſo, he
" then rightly deſerves it. So we read,
" Rom. vi. 23. *The wages of ſin is death*;
" *but the gift of God is eternal life, through*
" *Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* So that not-
" withſtanding the decree, no one
" falls under this ſentence, till by his
" ſin he hath brought it upon himſelf.
" No man is doomed to hell and diſ-
" truction, becauſe he was reprobated,
" but becauſe he was a ſinner, and de-
" ſerved it."

Having ſo far cleared the doctrine of theſe miſrepreſentations that are made of it, we come,

II. To return ſome anſwer to the *objections* that are commonly offered againſt it. And;

1. Some object againſt the doctrine of election, or God's free choice of ſome of fallen mankind, to make them the ſubjects of his grace now, and heirs of glory hereafter, while he paſſed by the reſt, and left them in the ruins of their apoſtacy; ſome object againſt this, as inconſiſtent with the *juſtice* and *righteouſneſs* of God. Why, ſay they, ſhould he chuſe ſome and not others, to make them the objects of his redeem-

ing love and grace, when all were alike miſerable, and equally undeſerving? Does not this make him a reſpecter of perſons? When, as we are told, Acts x. 34. *Of a truth God is no reſpecter of perſons*; and he has ſtrictly forbidden this in *earthly judges (b)*.

To this it may be anſwered, That reſpect of perſons which is blamed amongſt men, is when one is preferred before another, in a matter of *right*, for ſome ſiniſter and ſelfiſh ends; as when a judge *favours the rich in his cauſe*: but this is not chargeable where a perſon is under no obligation by any law or rule, but is at perfect liberty. Thus though a man that is a judge, muſt do alike by all, when he diſpenſes juſtice; yet a man is at liberty to take into his houſe and family whom he pleaſes, or to beſtow his eſtate on whom he will. If that place in *Acts* x. 34, 35. where the apoſtle *Peter* ſays, *Of a truth I perceive that God is no reſpecter of perſons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted with him*, is duly conſidered, it will appear that it does not intend that God does not ſhew favour to ſome above others; but all that it means is this, that God reſpects no man's perſon, either

(*b*) Deut. i. 17.

either leſs or more, for his *outward condition* and *carnal priviledges*.

Now, it is certain that God's election had no regard to any thing in the creature, to any deſervings found in the objects of it; for all lay in one corrupt maſs when the decree was exerciſed about them, and whatever they have excellent above others is the fruit of their election, and ſo not the cauſe of it.

The glorious God was at *perfect* liberty, being a debtor to none. He is ſovereign Lord of his own grace, and may certainly beſtow it where he will. None could lay claim to it, and therefore none are wronged if it is not beſtowed on them; though all are highly favoured who are the partakers of it.

Shall it be reckoned an act of injuſtice in God to ſave ſome of mankind only, when he might have left ALL to periſh, as well as the fallen angels, and not recovered ſo much as ONE of our apoſtate race? We may venture to refer the matter here to the deciſion of *impartial reaſon* itſelf. What! ſhall not God have power to diſpoſe of his own grace and glory as he pleaſeth? when he is a debtor to none, but makes that open challenge, *Who hath firſt given*

to

to him, and it ſhall be recompenced to him again (c)? Our Saviour hath ſaid enough to ſilence this objection in Matt. xx. 15. *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil becauſe I am good?*

2. This truth is further objected againſt as being inconſiſtent with the *goodneſs* and *mercy* of God. They ſay, *God's tender mercies are over all his works (d)*; that he is repreſented in ſcripture as a great lover of mankind, aed as having *no pleaſure in the death of a ſinner*, but a deſire that he ſhould *live (e)*. How then can it be that his ſaving deſign is reſtrained to any determinate number, while the reſt are left to periſh everlaſtingly? And ſome are ready to think and ſay, what is even horrible to repeat, that it taxes a merciful God with the cruelty of making man to *damn* him.

To this I anſwer,

However great the goodneſs and mercy of God are, yet all his creatures in *miſery* do not equally partake in them. *This* is plain from the diſtinction that is made between the *fallen-angels* and fallen mankind. The fallen angels arc wholly paſſed by, and not one

(c) Rom. xi. 35. (d) Pſal. cxlv. 9.
(e) Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

one of them ſaved; and this, to be ſure, without any derogation to the mercy of God. Yet there is as much reaſon to charge God with want of goodneſs and mercy, in leaving all the fallen angels to periſh, as in paſſing by ſome of fallen mankind. Or will any preſume to affirm that God is unmerciful, becauſe he chooſes the objects of his mercy, or *has mercy on whom he will have mercy (f)?* The *power* of God is limited and determined in the exerciſe of it, by his divine wiſdom and ſovereign pleaſure; and why ſhould not his *goodneſs* and *mercy* be ſo too?

Nor does this give occaſion for that injurious and blaſphemous reflection, that God made ſome men to DAMN them. For God's purpoſe to condemn men, does not conſider them as *creatures*, but as *ſinners*; as we have had occaſion to obſerve already *. That God did not create man on purpoſe that he might ſin, is evident from man's *primitive* ſtate, that of innocence, in which he might have continued. For though his Creator made him *mutable*, he yet made him *upright (g)*, without the leaſt tincture of ſin in his nature, or any diſpoſition,

(f) Rom. ix. 18.

* Pages 80, 81, 82, 83.

(g Eccleſ. vii. 29.

poſition, or inclination to it; but all the powers and faculties of the ſoul were diſpoſed to anſwer the ends of its creation, and thereby to glorify God. Now as God did not create man that he might ſin, he cannot be ſaid to create him that he might condemn him: "Several "other ideas intervene between God's "purpoſe to create and to condemn."

And though the merciful God *does not take pleaſure in the death of a ſinner*, as it is the miſery of his creature, yet he has, *and from the perfection of his nature cannot but have*, a high ſatisfaction in the diſplay of his own juſtice towards ſome, whoſe ſin has rendered them the proper objects for that terrible attribute to be glorified upon. Beſides, theſe ſame objections taken from the goodneſs and mercy of God, lie as much againſt God's not *eventually* ſaving all, as his determination not to ſave all. None ſay that all men will be *finally* ſaved; for the ſcripture declares the contrary in many places. Yet it is certain God *could* ſave all men if he ſo pleaſed. He could change the heart of every ſinner in the world, prepare him for ſalvation, and then beſtow it on him. Is it any derogation from his goodneſs and mercy that he *does not* do thus? Why then do any charge the opinion of God's determining

mining to ſave but a part of mankind, with ſuch unmercifulneſs, when the objection lies full as ſtrong againſt their own opinion, that God will *actually ſave but a part* of our ſpecies?

Nor do we by this opinion make ſalvation *narrower*, or *more confined*, than thoſe who oppoſe it; but in fact, make it as extenſive in its ſubjects as they do. As one has well obſerved upon this argument, "The difference between them "and us, is not about the *number* that "are ſaved; we both agree in this, "that none ſhall be ſaved but ſuch as "repent and believe, and obey the goſ-"pel, and that all ſuch ſhall certainly "be ſaved; but what we differ about "is, the *manner* of their obtaining ſal-"vation. We ſay, they are ſaved by "virtue of the electing love of God; "they ſay they are ſaved becauſe they "rightly improve their own free will. "We affirm them to be ſaved in ſuch "a way as aſcribes all the glory to "God; the way of ſalvation which "they hold is ſuch, as leaves great "room for man to glory. Thus far "then our doctrine appears every whit "as merciful to mankind as theirs, "inaſmuch as the difference is not about "the number of the ſaved, but the "way and manner of their coming to

"this

" this ſalvation. Nay, our doctrine " appears much *more merciful* than " theirs who oppoſe it: For ours makes " the ſalvation of millions of the fallen " children of men *abſolutely certain*, while " theirs makes the ſalvation of any man " but *barely poſſible*. And let any unpreju- " diced perſon judge, whether a doct- " rine that ſecures the ſalvation of an " innumerable multitude, is not more " worthy of a compaſſionate and mer- " ciful God, than a notion that only " puts the ſalvation of every one upon " a bare poſſibility, whence it may " happen, that even according to their " own tenets, no one may be ſaved " at laſt."

Nay, the author we here refer to* carries the matter ſtill higher, and with good reaſon aſſerts, " That the doctrine " of our *opponents is an unmerciful doct-* " *rine*, becauſe it is ſo far from aſcer- " taining the ſalvation of any, that it " makes the ſalvation of each man *a* " *moral impoſſibility*. They ſuppoſe the " election the ſcripture ſpeaks of to be " only a *conditional* one, i. e. provided " men will repent and believe, and per- " ſevere in holineſs; but they will not " allow that God has predeſtinated any " *to* faith, repentance, and perſeve- rance

* *Sladen.*

" rance to the end; but that the per-
" formance of theſe conditions depends
" upon *their own will.*

" But if this is the caſe, the queſtion
" which was once put to our Lord,
" may very properly be aſked here,
" *Who then can be ſaved* (*h*)*?* For, if
" the ſcripture has rightly repreſented
" men as by nature in a ſtate of
" *death* (*i*), to *every good work repro-*
" *bate* (*k*); *not ſufficient as of themſelves*
" to ſpeak a good *word*, or think a
" good *thought* (*l*); how is it poſſible
" they ſhould by their own innate power
" ever perform *theſe* great and weighty
" conditions?

Thus our doctrine appears to be not only conſiſtent with the mercy of God, but to give it a brighter diſplay. And I would only add upon this, It is the *grace* and *mercy* which I ſee ſhining forth in this doctrine, that makes me embrace it, and prize and contend for it. And however others may judge, I declare, with all ſerioufneſs, I would not for ten thouſand worlds but *my* own ſalvation ſhould ſtand more ſecure, than any will or power of my own is able to make it. To go on,

3. It

(*h*) Matt. xix. 25. (*i*) John v. 24. (*k*) Titus i. 16.
(*l*) 2 Cor. iii. 5.

3. It is objected againſt the truth we are maintaining, that it is conſiſtent with *human liberty*, and tends to eſtabliſh a *fatal neceſſity* of things. Some will ſay, if men are predeſtinated to faith and holineſs, a *force* is then put upon their inclinations, and a free choice taken away: As on the other hand they ſay, this brings men under a a *neceſſity* of ſinning; and why are they to be blamed or puniſhed for what they cannot help? Nay, ſome will venture ſo far as to ſay, that upon this principle God himſelf muſt be the author of ſin, or the blameable cauſe of evil.

I anſwer, To reconcile *the divine fore-ordination* with *human liberty*, is a thing too hard for us; nor may any one pretend to do it. Yet *the matter of fact is certain*, that men do act with liberty and freedom in things that are fore-ordained. And though *we* cannot reconcile them, there is certainly an agreement between theſe two. Nor is it more difficult to reconconcile *this*, than ſome *other* things which yet are generally owned. As for inſtance, the duty and ſucceſs of *prayer* with the doctrine of God's *unchangeableneſs*. Such is the perfection of God's nature that he is *unchangeable* in his mind and purpoſes. When he is ſaid in ſcripture

to

to *repent* (*m*) or change his mind, it is only ſpoken after *the manner of men*, and can by no means be underſtood as if he had altered his purpoſe upon any *new proſpect*, or was brought to do otherwiſe than he before deſigned; for this would plainly be to derogate from the *perfection* of his nature. Yet *prayer* is the appointed means of receiving mercy and bleſſings from God, and he does many things for his people in anſwer to their prayers, and has *never ſaid to the ſeed of* Jacob, *ſeek ye me in vain* (*n*). Now, I ſay, it is no more difficult to reconcile the divine fore ordination with human liberty, than it is the doctrine of the divine unchangeableneſs with the efficacy of prayer. And ſo there is no more reaſon to reject the doctrine of the *divine decrees*, than there is the doctrine of the *divine unchangeableneſs*, which even reaſon teaches.

Though the elect of God are predeſtinated to faith and holineſs, no *violence* is offered to their wills when they come to believe in Chriſt, and chuſe the way of holineſs. Though all that the Father hath given him, ſhall come to Chriſt, yet they come *freely*, not by a *force upon* their wills, but *a change* in them. Surely God may incline the wills of men, without

(*m*) Gen. vi. 6. (*n*) Iſa. xlv. 19.

without deſtroying the nature and freedom of them. So we read, *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power*, Pſal. cx. 3. And God tells his people, *I have loved thee with an everlaſting love; therefore with loving-kindneſs have I drawn thee* (o). And the church prays, *Draw me, we will run after thee*, Cant. i. 4. On the other hand, though the decree of God leaves ſome unto the ſinfulneſs of their own hearts and lives, out of which he is under no obligation to recover them, yet this *enforces* no man to ſin; but men's ſin is always *voluntary* and *choſen*. So it is ſaid of God's ſinful people of old, *Iſa.* lxvi. 3. *They have choſen their own ways, and their ſoul delighteth in their abominations.*

To illuſtrate and confirm *this*, let me refer you to the ſtory of *Joſeph*, which preſents us with a notable draught and ſcheme of *providence*. God had a purpoſe to advance *Joſeph* in *Egypt*, and alſo a deſign to ſave his father's houſe alive in a time of famine, by ſending him there before them to make proviſion for them; and as a *means* to this, *Joſeph* was ſold to the *Iſhmaelites*, and by them to an officer in *Pharaoh*'s court. But will any one ſay that his brethren did not act *freely* in their ſelling of him, and gratify their

(o) Jer. xxxi. 3.

their own *envy* and *malice* by that wicked deed?

So our Lord Jeſus Chriſt was *the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world* (*p*)? in the divine counſel and purpoſes; yet it is ſaid of the *Jews*, that *for envy they delivered him to* Pilate, *Matt.* xxvii. 18. And the apoſtle *Peter* thus charges them, *Acts* ii 23. *Him, being delivered by the determinate counſel and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and ſlain.* The crime is expreſsly ſaid to be *their own*, though done in purſuance of the *divine* determination.

Nor can the holy God be made *the author of ſin* when he leaves the ſinner to his ſinfulneſs; for though he *permits* the ſin, he *infuſes* no ſinfulneſs into the ſinner.

"Will any ſay, God's *denying* the revengful perſon, or the murderer, that grace which would prevent his executing his bloody deſigns, makes him the author of the murder? Or is his *denying* to others the neceſſary ſupply of their preſent exigencies, the cauſe of their making uſe of unlawful means, by plundering and ſtealing to ſubſiſt themſelves? No, *this* is only to be aſſigned to that wicked propenſity of nature, which *inclines* to ſin

(*p*) Rev. xiii. 8.

ſin when occaſion is offered, and not to the divine efficiency.

4. It is objected that this doctrine of particular election is inconſiſtent with ſuch declarations in ſcripture as thoſe that tell us, *God is not willing any ſhould periſh* (*q*), but would *have all men to be ſaved* (*r*); and with ſuch expoſtulations as God uſes with ſinners, and lamentations over them, when he ſays, *Turn ye, why will ye die* (*s*)? And, *O that thou hadſt known in this thy day, the things of thy peace* (*t*)! And alſo with ſuch general offers of grace as that, *Whoſoever will, let him take of the water of life freely* (*u*).

This may ſeem a plauſible objection at the firſt ſound, but upon due conſideration will not be found to overthrow what we aſſert. For as to ſuch *declarations* as this, *that God would have all men to be ſaved*, and therefore *to come to repentance*, they cannot be underſtood to be any thing more than declarations of mens *duty* to repent and turn to God that they may be ſaved, and that the thing in itſelf conſidered is to be deſired. They cannot poſſibly mean that he wills the repentance and ſalvation of all as he does of ſome; that he wills it as a thing which he will engage his power to accompliſh;

(*q*) 2 Pet. iii. 9. (*r*) 1 Tim. ii. 4. (*s*) Ezek. xxxiii. 11. (*t*) Luke xix. 42. (*u*) Rev. xxii. 17.

compliſh; for then it would immediately come to paſs.—The *expoſtulations* we meet with in ſcripture, are forms of ſpeech well ſuited to *awaken* mens conſideration, bring them to a ſenſe of their duty, and excite them to return to God; and are of this uſe in the hand of the Spirit, in the effectual calling and converſion of God's elect.—The *lamentations* that are made over ſinners, repreſent the *deplorableneſs* of their condition, and that God has no pleaſure in their miſery conſidered as his creatures. If they are looked upon as repreſenting God *diſappointed* in, and grieved at a thing which he could not help, and has come to paſs *contrary* to his deſign and expectation, they are certainly ſtrained too far.—And as to the *offers of grace* in the preached goſpel, *they* are and muſt be *general*, for the elect and non-elect live together under the ſame goſpel, and none but God knows who the one and the other are. Theſe free and general offers are for the *encouragement* of perſons awakened and in diſtreſs, and they prevent the returning ſinner from deſponding. There is indeed no *deceit* in theſe offers: *Whoever will may take of the water of life freely.* But when any are willing to accept of ſalvation in the way in which it is offered in the goſpel, they

are made ſo by God, and it is in purſuance of his purpoſe. We are ſure there is no inconſiſtency between *particular election* and a *general promiſe*, ſince our Saviour aſſerted the former at the ſame time that he made the latter, in that famous place, which we have once and again referred to, *John* vi. 37. *All that the Father giveth me, ſhall come to me: And him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.* From hence, I ſay, it inconteſtibly appears, That a determinate infallible election is not inconſiſtent with a free and general offer of grace. I ſhall mention but one objection more, which is,

5thly. That this doctrine *diſcourages perſons* in the uſe of means, and tends to *deſpair*. If I am not elected, may a perſon ſay, to what purpoſe are all my endeavours for ſalvation? I can never attain to it by them. And if I am elected, why ſhould I ſtrive and labour, when my ſalvation is made ſure by the immutable decree of God? But how prepoſterous is this, when the *end* and *means* come under the *ſame* decree! As I have had occaſion once and again to obſerve in the proceſs of this ſubject. God's decree does not at all take off the uſe of our endeavours, for in *the uſe of the means* the very decree itſelf is to receive its accompliſhment. Let me refer you to a

ſcripture-

ſcripture-ſtory for the illuſtration and proof of this. When the apoſtle *Paul* was in imminent danger of *ſhipwrack* in his voyage to *Rome*, he encouraged the company by aſſuring them, there *ſhould not be the loſs of any man's life, only of the veſſel.* For, ſays he, *There (w) ſtood by me this night the angel of God, whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve, ſaying, Fear not*, Paul, *thou muſt be brought before* Cæſar: *and lo, God hath given thee all them that ſail with thee. Wherefore, ſirs, be of good chear: for I believe God, that it ſhall be even as it was told me.* Yet when the *ſhipmen* were by and by going *to flee out of the ſhip* to ſave themſelves by *boat*, Paul *ſaid to the centurion, and to the ſoldiers, except theſe abide in the ſhip, ye cannot be ſaved.* Which did not at all weaken the aſſurance he had juſt before given them from God, that they *ſhould* all be ſaved; for God, who had appointed the end, that they ſhould be ſaved, had alſo appointed the *means*, that they ſhould be ſaved by the help of thoſe ſhip-men: ſo though God has ordained the ſalvation of thoſe that ſhall be ſaved, he has ordained it in the way of faith and holineſs, and a *working out their own ſalvation with fear and trembling (x).*

(w) Acts xxvii. 23, 24, 25. (x) Phil. ii. 12.

There is no ſuch decree as this, That the elect ſhall be ſaved, whether they work about their own ſalvation, or not. Or, that the elect may continue unconverted, and unconcerned about eternal bleſſedneſs, and yet get ſafe to heaven at laſt. If any are ordained unto eternal life, it is alſo ordained that they *ſhall be awakened* to a ſenſe of their ſin and miſery, to earneſt prayer to God for recovering and renewing grace, and to a diligent waiting on him in the ways of his appointment, until that he have mercy on them. How then does this doctrine ſet aſide the uſe of means in order to attain the end?

If any make this a plea for not ſetting about the work of their ſalvation, it is only an excuſe for *ſloth*, and a meer pretence for their not doing what they have *no mind* to do. For they do not urge and plead the decree in *other* and *leſſer* matters, as they do in the matters of their ſalvation. Other things are foreordained as well as men's ſalvation; how long they ſhall *live*, and whether they ſhall be rich and *proſperous* in the world. But who ſays, I do not know whether God has decreed that I ſhall live to be old, and therefore I will not take food to preſerve my life, nor phyſic to recover me when I am ſick? Or, I do not

not know whether the decree will allow me to proſper, or not, and therefore I will not work, nor trade, nor uſe any endeavours to get an eſtate. If any object the decree in the one caſe, that do not in *the other*, ſurely they are ſelf-condemned.

And how can this doctrine have a peculiar tendency to drive perſons to *deſpair*, when it aſcertains ſalvation to a *very great number*, an *innumerable multitude*, and no one knows but *he* is of that number? For it is a very great ſin for any one to conclude himſelf a reprobate. The *greateſt* and the *oldeſt* ſinner may not do ſo. For many of the elect of God have been left under great ſins, and ſuffered to lie long in ſin too; but been after all brought *to the faith of God's elect (y)*, *waſhed ſanctified* and *juſtified (z)* in this world, and *glorified* in the next. And if the ſinner *is* awakened, and brought into diſtreſs and agony, there is *the more hope* that he will be found of this number and that a purpoſe of mercy concerning him is *beginning* to be executed. How in the world does this doctrine tend to deſpair any more than thoſe places of ſcripture that ſpeak of the difficulty of ſalvation, and tell us that *few*, comparatively, will be ſaved? Such paſſages as that in our Saviour's ſermon on the

(y) Tit. i. 1. (z) 1 Cor. vi. 11.

mount, *Matt.* vii. 13, 14. *Enter ye in at the ſtrait gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be which go in thereat; becauſe ſtrait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

But it is eaſy to load any truth with *miſrepreſentations* and *abuſes* if men will ſet themſelves to do ſo; and ſuch is the *perverſeneſs* of ſome, that they will give a wrong turn to a thing that is never ſo well explained and guarded. When we ſet forth the *mercy* of God, his readineſs to pardon, and willingneſs to receive ſinners that return to him by repentance and faith in Jeſus Chriſt, ſome will abuſe it to *preſumption*, and from thence encourage themſelves to *go on in ſin becauſe grace abounds* (*a*), and to defer their repentance to the laſt of their time. This, ſo far as we can make a judgment, is a more *common* caſe than the other; and it is full as *dangerous* to the ſouls of men: Yet none would have us forbear it; and ſome think it cannot be too often treated of, nor enough enlarged upon.

Indeed it is a uſual thing for perſons under the *firſt awakenings*, to have their minds exerciſed about the doctrine of *election*; but ſo far as I have been able to

(*a*) Rom. vi. 1.

to obſerve, it has been a *help*, rather than a hindrance, to them in the work of a thorough converſion, and ſaving cloſure with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and has been uſed by the holy Spirit as a means to excite them to give *more diligence to make their calling ſure (b)*, and to lay *the ſtronger hold on the hope ſet before them*, in a glorious Chriſt to whom the goſpel invites them to *flee for refuge (c)*.

And it ſeems to me, that upon a fair and juſt repreſentation of the ſtate of the caſe, it will appear to every conſiderate and unprejudiced perſon, that a miniſter in treating with troubled and awakened conſciences, can do it with much greater advantage upon the foot of *particular election*, and thoſe other doctrines of grace that are connected with it, than on the foot of *univerſal redemption*, and the opinions that follow that. For ſuppoſe a perſon in deep concern about his everlaſting ſalvation, ſhould come to a miniſter for his help and direction, and the miniſter ſhould tell him, "God was a kind and meciful Being, who delighted in the happineſs of his creatures, and made none of them miſerable that did not make themſelves ſo; and Chriſt was the Saviour of the world, who died for all men, and conſequently for him as much

(b) 2 Pet. i. 10. (c) Heb. vi. 18.

much as for any one; and if he did but repent of his ſins, and truſt in the merits of Chriſt, and lead a good life, and continue to do ſo to the end, he need not fear, for the goſpel promiſed ſalvation to him." Might he not reply? and if his *concern* was deep and thorough, he would reply to this effect, "Though God *is a kind and merciful Being*, it is as true that he is ſo holy as to hate ſin, and ſo juſt as to puniſh the ſinner; and how much ſoever he *delights in the happineſs of his creatures*, we know it will be the portion of a great many of them to be everlaſtingly miſerable: True, *he makes none of them miſerable that do not make themſelves ſo*; but this is my unhappy caſe: I ſee I am a ſinner, though I was not ſo ſenſible of it as I am now: I have revolted from him and rebelled againſt him; and I fear he will make me as miſerable as I have made myſelf ſinful. And if Chriſt *is the Saviour of all men*, but all men will not be actually and finally ſaved by him; this general redemption leaves the ſalvation of all men at an uncertainty: If I could know he died for *me* in particular, I ſhould think my ſalvation ſecured; but I have no reaſon to think he died for me any more than for thoſe who will periſh forever. As to that *faith*, *repentance and obedience*, which the

the goſpel makes the conditions of an intereſt in ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, whatever undue opinion I have had of my own ſtrength before, I am now convinced theſe are things out of my power, and muſt be wrought in me by a divine energy. I find my heart to be hard and unbelieving, averſe to the way of holineſs, and only bent to ſin. And there are ſo many evil inclinations to be denied, temptations to be reſiſted, and enemies to be overcome, that I fear I ſhall not hold out in the way to heaven; and without I endure to the end, I cannot expect to be ſaved. Others have turned back, after they have ſeemed to ſet out well; and I have no better ſecurity than they had. My ſalvation, for any thing I can ſee, is very uncertain, yea, very unlikely, and next to impoſſible, if I am left ſo much to myſelf in it."

On the other hand; When a miniſter tells an enquiring, ſolicitous, anxious ſoul, not only that the death of Chriſt is of *value ſufficient* to purchaſe ſalvation for all men, if God had been pleaſed to deſign the ſalvation of all; but that he died to render the ſalvation of a very great number of them infallibly *certain*; and therefore has purchaſed for every one of theſe that *faith* and *repentance* which the goſpel makes neceſſary to ſal-

vation, which are moſt commonly wrought in them by the Holy Spirit in the uſe of the appointed means; and that their final *perſeverance* in grace, and compleat victory over ſin, the world, and Satan, are ſecured in a well-ordered *covenant*, of which the Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf is the head and ſurety: and if when the inquiring perſon expreſſes a doubt and fear that he is not one of the happy number, and ſeems ready to be diſcouraged on this account, the miniſter further lets him know, there is no *real* ground for any ſuch fear, inaſmuch as none can tell who are included in this number, and who are not; and many are included in it who have greatly feared the contrary; that the preſent *concern* of mind he is under renders it very hopeful that he will be found of this number at laſt, inaſmuch as this is the way of the Spirit with the *elect* of God, when he is about effectually to call them; firſt to awaken them out of their former eaſe and ſecurity, to convince and humble them, and ſo drive them to Chriſt: That if he goes to Chriſt for life upon the *general* call of the goſpel, his *election* of God is put out of queſtion; and then he need not be diſcouraged on account either of his unworthineſs or inability; for the promiſes of effectual

and

and perſevering grace made to Chriſt in behalf of the elect are *abſolute*, and he may plead them, and take the comfort of them, and reſt aſſured that as Chriſt *will caſt out none that come to him (d)*, ſo it is not *the will of his Father in heaven, that one of theſe little ones ſhould periſh (e)*; and that therefore he has undertaken to *perfect that which concerns them (f)*, to compleat *the good work begun in them (g)*, to protect and guide them through this evil world, and carry them ſafely to the kingdom prepared for them.—— When, I ſay, a miniſter applies himſelf in this manner, upon theſe principles, to an *awakened* diſtreſſed ſoul, does it not carry greater *encouragement*, and ſtronger conſolation in it, than the other, which only makes the ſalvation of all men *poſſible*, but *ſecures* ſalvation to none of them; and leaves them ſo much to themſelves in a difficult and hazardous work, to which they know and find they are ſadly unequal?

Thus an anſwer has been given to ſome of the more common *objections* brought againſt this truth. But I have not yet gone through all that I propoſed; though I have endeavoured to be as comprehenſive as I could. Another

 diſcourſe

(d) John vi. 37, 8. (e) Matt. xviii. 14.
(f) Pſ. cxxxviii. 8. (g) Phil. i. 6.

diſcourſe muſt be allowed me: In which I ſhall endeavour to *improve* the ſubject to the ends of practical religion; that perſons may be directed how to *make their election ſure (h)*; for a perſon will never be throughly reconciled to this doctrine, till he has a hope of *his own intereſt* in it. *Conſider of what has been ſaid, and the Lord give you underſtanding in all things (i)*; eſtabliſhment in *this* and *every other* goſpel truth. *This alſo we wiſh* brethren, *even your* growing up towards *perfection (k)*, in knowledge and faith, together with holineſs and comfort. We would not have you always as *babes* to be *fed with milk*, but as *men in Chriſt* to be able to receive and digeſt theſe truths which the apoſtle calls *ſtrong meat (l)*. It is a mean and a low thing for a chriſtian to be content to know nothing but what is *neceſſary* to ſalvation. There are many truths revealed in the goſpel, which we cannot ſay are abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation, which yet it is a ſhame for chriſtians not to have the knowledge of, becauſe they redound to the honour of God, and have an influence into ſome parts at leaſt of practical religion. And if theſe are among *the deep things of God (m)*, let

(*h*) 2 Pet. i. 10. (*i*) 2 Tim. ii. 7. (*k*) 2 Cor. xiii. 9.
(*l*) Heb. v. 13, 14. (*m*) 1 Cor. ii. 10.

let it not discourage you from a humble cautious search into them by the light of scripture, and with prayer to *the spirit of truth*, to *lead you into all truth* (*n*).

I conclude now with the apostle's prayer for the *Phillippians*, 1 ch. 9, 10, 11 ver. *This I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent*; (or, as the margin reads it, *try* things that *differ*); *that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by* Jesus Christ, *to the praise and glory of God.* AMEN.

(*n*) John xvi. 13.

OF

OF
Predeſtination unto Life.

SERMON IV.

ROM. viii. 30.

Moreover, whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called; and whom he called, them he alſo juſtified; and whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified.

WE have had three diſcourſes from theſe words concerning the doctrine of *Predeſtination unto life.* The truth has been *explained* and ſtated in ſeveral propoſitions. It has been *confirmed* and eſtabliſhed by plain ſcripture-proof, and ſolid argument agreeable to ſcripture. Some *miſrepreſentations* made of it have been rectified; and ſeveral *objections* obviated. I hope now to finiſh the ſubject as God ſhall vouchſafe to help. And the next thing we are to proceed to according to the method we at firſt propoſed is,

IV. To

IV. To ſet before you ſome of the *abſurd conſequences* which follow upon the denial of this doctrine, and the *difficulties* of which the contrary ſcheme labours, and with which they are embarraſſed who are on the other ſide of the queſtion. *This*, I apprehend will caſt ſome more light into the ſubject, and further confirm the truth we are maintaining; and it may help to undeceive ſome who have been ready to think all the difficulty lies on our part, and there is little or nothing for our opponents to reconcile, or to clear away, before their notion can be embraced. And,

1. If ſuch an election as we have been ſpeaking of is not granted, it follows, That *the will of God*, even in an affair wherein his own glory is ſo greatly concerned as the ſalvation of men, is *dependent on the will of the creature.*

I think the more *general* ſcheme of thoſe who cannot ſubſcribe to the doctrine of election is, That God has not *infallibly* willed the ſalvation of any particular perſons, but *conditionally* willed the ſalvation of all men; that is, provided *they* will repent and believe: but he has not *determined* to give this repentance and faith to any in particular; at leaſt not till he ſees how they improve the common grace and advantages they

are

are under. This is evidently to make the will of God in this matter, ſubject to, and directed by the will of man, which is very diſhonourable to him. This notion repreſents God, as ſaying, "I will that all men ſhould be ſaved; nevertheleſs, it muſt finally be, not as I will, but as they will." This is in effect to *take away* the will of God; for to be ſure he can have no *abſolute* will of his own, whoſe will muſt be directed by the will of another, and is liable to be fruſtrated by it.

2. Without ſuch an election as we are maintaining, God *might* be wholly diſappointed in his ſaving deſign reſpecting the children of men, and the precious blood of Chriſt *might* have been ſhed in vain. The one could not be ſecured, nor the other prevented, without an election of *individuals*, to whom the redemption purchaſed by Chriſt ſhould be *infallibly* applied.

They will not get clear of this abſurd conſequence, by having recourſe to the *fore-knowledge* of God, and ſaying, he certainly fore-knew that ſome, and a great number would repent and believe, and ſo was aſſured he ſhould not be diſappointed in his deſign, and that his Son would not die in vain; becauſe, as we have ſhown already, the fore-knowledge of

of God neceſſarily infers his fore-ordination: for it is certain, that when all things *future* were no where but in the mind of God, in the days of eternity, he could know nothing of them but what was his determinate will and counſel concerning them.

Or if they will ſay, that to prevent this diſappointment, God will ſo *order* it that ſome ſhall be inclined and diſpoſed to comply with the terms of ſalvation; this is in effect to give up the point, and grant what we aſſert: for this will be to allow *diſcriminating grace exerciſed in time*, which cannot well be defended without allowing a *diſcrimination in God's purpoſe* relating thereto; becauſe they muſt otherwiſe ſuppoſe there are *new* determinations in the divine will, which would be to argue him *imperfect* in wiſdom and knowledge.

3. Another of the groſs abſurdities which I apprehend follows upon the denial of this doctrine is, That man's ſalvation is left at the ſame uncertainty under the *new covenant*, that it was in under the *firſt*; nay, that the ſtate of mankind *now*, is much more difficult and dangerous than it was then.

Man's happineſs, or miſery, turned upon the exerciſe of *his own free-will* under the firſt covenant; and ſo it does ſtill if the

the ſalvation of a number is not *ſecured* by electing love and grace. And can we ſuppoſe it conſiſtent with the love and kindneſs of God, to leave ſalvation again to depend upon the will of man, which had ruined him once before? If free-will ruined man in his *firſt ſtate*, while he was *upright*, is it not much more likely to ruin him in his *worſt ſtate*, now that he is *fallen* and *corrupt?* How can we imagine the wiſe God to expect his deſign of man's ſalvation ſhould be anſwered in the ſame way, when it was rendered much more unlikely; I may ſay *impoſſible* now, though it was not ſo before? Agreeably we read, *Job* xv. 15. *Behold he putteth no truſt in his ſaints.* He does not *truſt* the concerns of his glory in their ſalvation in their own hands; for he well knew his ſaving deſign would then never take effect. And therefore their ſalvation is *infallibly* ſecured by the new covenant, which is called a *better covenant, eſtabliſhed upon better promiſes*; promiſes of reconciling, renewing and perſevering grace, poſitive and abſolute, *Heb.* viii. 6. A tranſcript of which covenant follows, in the 10th, 11th, and 12th ver. and it runs in the moſt *abſolute* unconditional ſtrain that can be; *This is the covenant that I will make with them, ſaith the Lord, I will put my laws into*

their

their minds, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a people. And they ſhall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, ſaying, Know the Lord; for all ſhall know me, from the leaſt to the greateſt. For I will be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs, and their ſins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

Once more,

4*thly*, Another of the conſequences, which, as I conceive, follows upon the denial of this doctrine is, That the ſalvation of every *particular man* does *originate* with himſelf; or at leaſt is to be *divided* between God and the creature.

They that are in the other way of thinking, ſuppoſe that by the death of Chriſt mankind are put into a *ſalvable* ſtate; but that the ſucceſs, *as to particular perſons*, depends upon *their* acceptance of the offered ſalvation, and compliance with the terms of it; which acceptance and compliance (according to them) are not the reſult and fruit of men's own reaſon and conſideration, will and choice excited by thoſe rational arguments that have been ſet before them, and that moral ſuaſion which has been uſed with them. Some of theſe will indeed ſpeak of the *grace of God*, and acknowledge we can do nothing without

that;

that; but all they ſeem to mean is a *common general grace* which goes along with the goſpel, and one may improve to *equal* advantage as another.--And if it be thus, the ſinner that is ſaved, is furniſhed with an eaſy anſwer to that queſtion, 1 *Cor.* iv. 7. *Who maketh thee to differ from another?* The happy difference, inſtead of being aſcribed to the free and powerful *grace of God*, muſt, upon this principle, be aſcribed to *the man himſelf*, his own reaſon and choice, his good conduct and endeavours. There is no *medium* here; for according to the apoſtle's arguing, every man's ſalvation takes riſe from the free grace of God in election, or from his own works. *Rom.* xi. 5, 6, *Even ſo at this time alſo there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace*, (ſuch as I mentioned juſt now, *viz.* electing-grace; *if by grace*, I ſay,) *then it is no more of works*; *otherwiſe grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace*; *otherwiſe work is no more work.* But that doctrine which gives the creature ſo much room to boaſt, and put in for ſo great a ſhare in the honour of his own ſalvation, cannot be of God; for he will not have any thing of his *glory given to another* (o). And nothing can be more contrary to the

(o) Iſa. xlii. 8.

the *deſign* of the goſpel, which is to ſtain the pride of all fleſh, to take away all occaſions of glorying from the creature, and to ſecure to divine grace its full honours. The prophet ſhews the glory and tendency of the goſpel-ſtate, when he ſays, as in *Iſa.* ii. 17. *The loftineſs of man ſhall be bowed down, and the haughtineſs of men ſhall be made low, and the Lord alone ſhall be exalted in that day.*

The exaltation of FREE GRACE is evidently what the glorious God aims at in the contrivance of fallen man's redemption. To *this* the whole frame is admirably fitted, from the firſt corner-ſtone, to the bringing forth the top-ſtone thereof (*p*). 1 *Cor.* i. 29, 30, 31. *That no fleſh ſhould glory in his preſence. But of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus who of God is made unto us wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.* Eph. ii. 7, 8, 9. *That in the ages to come he might ſhew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindneſs towards us, through Chriſt Jeſus. For by grace are ye ſaved, through faith, and that not of yourſelves; it is the gift of God; not of works, leaſt any man ſhould boaſt.*

And ſo we proceed to the

V. general

(*p*) Zech. iv. 7.

V. general head, which is, To ſhew the *importance* of this doctrine, and the place it holds in the ſcheme of Chriſtianity; by which you will be helped to judge whether it is a doctrine that had better be ſuppreſſed than publiſhed in the church. But here I muſt be content with *hinting* at things, without enlargment, or I ſhall much exceed my limits.

To be ſure: The goſpel cannot be *fully* preached if *this* article is dropt; for it is evidently a *great* part of the ſubject matter of the ſacred pages.

We cannot rightly conceive of the *attributes* of God, if we are unacquainted with this doctrine.—It is in this decree of election, that *ſeveral* of the glories and excellencies of the divine nature, appear in their brighteſt and ſtrongeſt light. As to the *ſovereignty* of the great God, his abſolute ſupremacy over all creatures, and right to diſpoſe of them for his own glory; *this* is left out of the notion men frame of God, and he quite loſes the glory of this high prerogative, when this truth is not underſtood and acknowledged.—And as to the divine *goodneſs*, *mercy* and *grace*, nothing diſplays theſe ſo much, as the everlaſting purpoſe of God to deliver ſo many of the children of *Adam* from the miſery they had involved themſelves in, and the puniſh-

ment

ment they had deſerved. To deliver *ſome*, and not all, renders the divine goodneſs towards the ſubjects of this deliverance, more perſpicuous and glorious. The ſalvation of men would not ſo fully appear to be from *free mercy* and *grace*, if no *difference* was made between perſons. To this purpoſe the apoſtle ſpeaks, *Rom.* ix. 23. *That he might make known the riches of his glory on the veſſels of mercy, whom he had before prepared unto glory.*—His making choice of *ſome*, while he paſſes by others, commends his favour to *them*, renders it more glorious in their eyes, conſtrains their admiration now, and will raiſe their higheſt notes of praiſe hereafter. The eternal melody they will make, is that, *Rev.* v. 9. *Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the ſeals thereof; for thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redeemed us to God by thy blood* OUT OF *every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation.*

Many of the peculiar, high and noble, inſtructive and comfortable *doctrines* of the goſpel are concerned in this, and connected with it. What will become of that *covenant of redemption* between the Father and the Son from the days of eternity, of which we read in the 89th *Pſalm*; 53d. ch. of *Iſaiah*; 10th and 17th ch. of *John*, and other places; if a

diſ-

diſtinguiſhed number were not given to Chriſt, as his charge, and as his reward?—The *ſatisfaction of Chriſt* is rendered a very looſe uncertain and unſafe thing, if there are not a certain number for whom it was made and accepted; and the value of it is leſſened exceedingly, if it did not purchaſe faith, repentance, and holineſs, for them on whom they are beſtowed.——That *free-will* which ſtands in competition with, and oppoſition to the grace of God in our ſalvation, can never without this be thrown to the ground as it ought to be. The doctrine of *efficacious grace* which does ſo much honour to the Holy Spirit; and the doctrine of the *ſaints perſeverance in grace*, which is comfortable to them, depend very much on this doctrine of *election*.—This is the *foundation* of all thoſe *great and precious promiſes* contained in the new covenant; the *groundwork* of our redemption; the *riſe* and *ſpring* of all thoſe ſpiritual bleſſings we are made partakers of, to which the ſaints ſhould look back in their joyful praiſes, and without the conſideration of which, they cannot *comprehend what is the height and depth, the length and breadth of the love of God in Chriſt (q)*. It is therefore taken into that thankſgiving of the apoſtle,

(q) Eph. iii. 18, 19.

apoſtle, *Eph.* i. 3, 4. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly things in Chriſt,* ACCORDING AS HE HAS CHOSEN US IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.

In a word: As this doctrine is a ſpring of *conſolation* to believers, ſo it is a moſt powerful argument to holineſs and *obedience*; and this not only that they may not be without the tokens of election, but out of gratitude, and by way of acknowledgment to God for his diſtinguiſhing and eternal love to them. Accordingly it is matter of obſervation, that *thoſe* who have embraced this doctrine, have been among the moſt exemplary, cautious, diligent and fruitful chriſtians. But this has almoſt entered me into the

VIth and laſt thing propoſed, namely, The *improvement of the ſubject* to the ends of ſerious religion, and practical godlineſs. For had I taken it to be only an abſtruſe ſpeculation, and not *a doctrine according to godlineſs* (*r*), I had ſpared myſelf the pains of theſe diſcourſes.

The ſubject may be improved,

1. To let us into the meaning of ſeveral of the acts of God's *providence.*

(*r*) 1 Tim. vi. 3.

Thus we are from hence furniſhed with a reaſon, why *the human race was not caſt off by God, upon the apoſtacy*, as were the angels that ſinned. It was becauſe there was an election of grace amongſt them. This gave birth to the early promiſe of *the ſeed of the woman to break the ſerpent's head (s)*. To this it was owing that there was an arreſt of judgment, after the ſentence was pronounced on our apoſtate parents; and that mankind was allowed to partake ſo largely of the divine goodneſs.

We alſo learn from hence the reaſon of God's patience with the *preſent world*, that is grown ſo ſinful. It is becauſe of a diſtinguiſhing remnant of mankind that are in it now, and are to be born into it hereafter. So thoſe words are to be expounded, *Iſa.* lxv. 8, 9. *Thus ſaith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluſter, and one ſaith, Deſtroy it not, for a a bleſſing is in it: ſo will I do for my ſervants ſake, that I may not deſtroy them all. And I will bring forth a ſeed out of* Jacob, *and out of* Judah *an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect ſhall inherit it, and my ſervants ſhall dwell there.* So our Saviour ſaid that *for the elect's ſake, the days* of the deſtruction of the *Jews ſhould be ſhortned*, and a ſtop put to that deſolation,

(s) Gen. iii. 15.

tion, which otherwiſe would have proceeded to that degree, that *no fleſh ſhould be ſaved*, Matt. xxiv. 22. When the elect of God are all born into the world, and ripened for heaven, then judgment will commence, the patience of God, with our ſinful ſpecies, will be at an end, and that deſtruction by fire unto which the world is reſerved will come on.

Again, Here is a reaſon of the divine forbearance and long-ſuffering towards *particular ſinners*. If they are not among the elect themſelves, who are to be effectually called in due time, it may be ſome of the elect are to *ſpring from them*, and for this reaſon they are ſpared notwithſtanding all their provocations. If God ſhould make quick work, and *early deſtroy all the wicked* (*t*) of the earth, whence ſhould his elect ariſe in the world? *Jeroboam* and *Ahaz* were not cut off in their firſt tranſgreſſions, becauſe good *Abijah* and *Hezekiah* were to ſpring from them (*u*). Many that will heartily embrace Chriſt, muſt riſe from ſuch as reject him. "The Lord ſuffers many a wicked perſon to ſtand for a time under his patience, ſays holy Mr. *Flavell*, becauſe children are to ſpring from them, who will obey and embrace that Chriſt whom their wicked parents

 rejected."

(*t*) Pſ. ci. 8. (*u*) 1 Kings xiv. 1. 2 Kings xvi. 20.

rejected." The world then has no need to murmur at, and quarrel with this doctrine of election as they do. It is well for the reſt of the world that there is *an election of grace* out of it. Others fare the better for this: Since for the ſake of theſe the wicked world is ſpared from age to age, and the execution of divine juſtice towards particular ſinners delayed.

2. This doctrine affords much *comfort* and *encouragement* to ſerious and thoughtful minds, in times of great *defection* and *corruption*.

When there is a wide ſpread of error, and a mighty torrent of profaneneſs; when *evil men and ſeducers wax worſe and worſe*, as *they will do* in *the laſt days* (*w*); when many are turned from the faith, and numbers loſe their firſt love; let the pious and faithful in Chriſt Jeſus remember for their encouragement, it is impoſſible to deceive the elect in things that are eſſential to ſalvation; and *the foundation of God ſtands ſure*; *having this ſeal, The Lord knoweth them that are his* (*x*). And it may be the number of *theſe* is much larger than we are ſometimes ready to fear. As in *Elijah*'s time, when the apoſtacy from the true worſhip and ſervice of God was ſo general, that the

(*w*) 2 Tim. iii. 13. (*x*) 2 Tim. ii. 19.

the good prophet thought there was no one beſide himſelf who preſerved his integrity, he was told for his comfort there were thouſands more (*y*). The apoſtle mentions this inſtance, and applies it to the times of the preaching of the goſpel, *Rom.* xi. 2, 3, 4, 5. *God hath not caſt away his people which he fore-knew. Wot ye not what the ſcripture ſaith of* Elias? *how he maketh interceſſion to God againſt* Iſrael, *ſaying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they ſeek my life. But what ſaith the anſwer of God unto him? I have reſerved to myſelf ſeven thouſand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even ſo then, at this preſent time alſo, there is a remnant according to the election of grace.*

3. Since ſome of the children of men are choſen unto ſalvation, predeſtinated unto life, let us inquire, Whether we have at preſent any good ground to hope that we are of the diſtinguiſhed number.

This may be known, or the apoſtle would not have exhorted us to *give diligence to make our election ſure*; as he does in 2 *Pet.* i. 10. And he writes to the *Theſſalonians*, as if their election (or the election of the *body* of that church) was no longer a matter of doubt, but of

(*y*) 1 Kings xix. 18.

certainty. The 1ſt ep. 1 ch. 4 ver. *Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.*

We need not here ſay in our hearts, *Who ſhall aſcend into heaven* (*z*), to ſee whether my name is written there? *Who will bring the book of life down to me*, to ſee whether I am enrolled in it? The proof of this matter *is near us* (*a*), even in *the book of ſcripture* which we have in our hands.

The apoſtle in the place juſt mentioned, tells the *Theſſalonians* what was the proof of their election. *Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God: For our goſpel came to you, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt, and in much aſſurance* (*b*). Inquire then, what *effect* the word of the goſpel has had upon you. Has it come to you *with power?* Has it had a convincing, enlightening, humbling, converting efficacy upon you? Have you found it as *a fire*, and as *a hammer, that breaketh the rock in pieces* (*c*)? Has it come to you in the *Holy Ghoſt?* accompanied with ſuch an energy of the Spirit, as to kill ſin in you, and make you *alive to God* (*d*)? for *the letter killeth, but* it is *the Spirit giveth life* (*e*). Has it come to you with *much aſſurance?*

(*z*) Rom. x. 6. (*a*) Rom. x. 8. (*b*) 1 Theſ. i. 4, 5. (*c*) Jer. xxiii. 29. (*d*) Rom. vi. 11. (*e*) 2 Cor. iii. 6.

aſſurance? Are you ſo convinced of the truth of the goſpel, as to adhere to the profeſſion of it againſt all the diſputings of men, and diſcouragements of the world; and ſo as to venture your ſouls, your everlaſting concerns upon the verity of it? Do you eſteem the records of the goſpel to be *faithful ſayings*, and *worthy of all acceptation* (*f*); the *Bible* the rule of your life, the foundation of your hope, and ſpring of your conſolation? This ſucceſs of the goſpel upon you will be a proof of your election, as it was of the election of the believing obedient *Theſſalonians*.

The apoſtle *Peter* alſo ſhews us in what way and order to *make our election ſure*. As in the place we have juſt mentioned, 2 *Pet.* i. 10. *Give diligence, brethren, to make your calling and election ſure*; your election by your calling: For, *whom he predeſtinated, them he alſo called.* If then God has added the *internal* to the *external* call of the goſpel: If you are brought out of thoſe ſinful ways you once walked in, to walk in *the way of good men* (*g*), the way of holineſs and obedience; if you are taken off from the world, and no longer ſeek it as your bleſſedneſs, but have choſen God for your portion and happineſs; if heaven is your end, and you are reſolved to take up with nothing

(*f*) 1 Tim. i. 15. (*g*) Prov. ii. 20.

ſhort of it, and make uſe of Chriſt as the way to it; you may then be aſſured, you ſhall ſee *the good of his choſen, and rejoice with the gladneſs of his nation, and glory with his inheritance* (*h*).

Again, We are told, *Acts* xiii. 48. *As many as were ordained unto eternal life, believed.* Examine then, whether *the faith of God's elect* (*i*) is wrought in you. Do you *believe the record God has given of his Son* (*k*); God's way of ſaving ſinners by Jeſus Chriſt, revealed and propoſed in the goſpel, do you receive it, approve of, and reſt in it, and renouncing all other hopes and expectations, repoſe your whole confidence therein? And is Chriſt precious to you, as he is to *them that believe* (*l*)? You may know then you were ordained to eternal life before the foundation of the world. To proceed,

Your *love to God*, as well as your faith in Chriſt, evidences your election: for ſo we read, 1 *John* iv. 19. *We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.* Let it then be inquired, Do *I love the Lord our God with all the heart and ſoul, and mind, and ſtrength* (*m*)? Do I make choice of him before all other things, and delight in him ſupremely? Is this the inward language of my ſoul, *Thou art my portion, O Lord,*

(*h*) Pſal. cvi. 5. (*i*) Tit. i. 1. (*k*) 1 John v. 10. (*l*) 1 Pet. ii. 7. (*m*) Luke x. 27.

Lord (*n*). *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is nothing on earth I desire besides thee* (*o*). You may then hear him saying to you, *Yea, I have loved you with an everlasting love* (*p*).

But as love cannot be sincere unless it is obediential, so our *new obedience* is another proof and evidence of our election. The apostle has told us, *Eph.* i. 4. *He hath chosen us before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love.* We must inquire then, if we would know our election, Whether there is a separation wrought between us and our sins and lusts? Whether we walk *not after the flesh, but after the Spirit* (*q*)? Whether *indwelling sin* is a burthen and grief to us, and we are labouring in the mortification of it? Whether we are in the use of all proper and appointed means; *Cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and Spirit; perfecting holiness in the fear of God* (*r*)? Do we desire nothing more than *holiness*, a conformity to the image of Christ? And do we lament nothing more than our want of holiness, or of conformity to that image? This is *a token of salvation* (*s*). You may rest satisfied from hence, that God *has not appointed*

(*n*) Ps. cxix. 57. (*o*) Ps. lxxiii. 25. (*p*) Jer. xxxi. 3. (*q*) Rom. viii. 1. (*r*) 2 Cor. vii. 1. (*s*) Phil. i. 28.

you to wrath, but to obtain ſalvation by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt (*s*).

4. The next uſe muſt be by way of counſel, to ſuch as have no ground *at preſent* to conclude themſelves of this number; who have no reaſon as yet to think themſelves effectually called and converted; to have that faith, and love, and holineſs, which are the marks of God's elect. To ſuch I would addreſs a few words of *direction*; and O that they might be regarded and put in practice!

1. Do not *murmur* at God's decree of election; for this is to *rebel* againſt God, and will highly diſpleaſe him. And beſides, you have *no reaſon* to do ſo; for this is not the *cauſe* of your continuing in ſin and impenitence, as was ſhewn when we anſwered the *objections* againſt this doctrine; but it muſt be aſſigned to the *corruption* and wickedneſs of your nature, from which indeed you cannot be delivered but by the almighty grace of God. Labour to be reconciled to God's method of ſaving ſinners, though it be not ſuch as human reaſon might have carved out. His method of ſalvation is certainly the wiſeſt and the beſt: For as the heavens *are high above the earth, ſo are his thoughts above our thoughts, and his ways above our ways*, Iſa. lv. 9.

2. Beware

(*s*) 1 Theſſ. v. 9

2. Beware of drawing up any *dark concluſions* concerning yourſelf, as if the decree of God was againſt you. *Satan* may tempt you to this; *but you are not ignorant of his devices* (*t*). Remember, though there are many ſigns of election, there are *no certain tokens of reprobation*, except *the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt*. Suppoſing the doctrine of election, yet, as God has *a reconciling work* on foot in this world, you are as likely to have an intereſt in it as another. It is certain God has a purpoſe of mercy for a great many. Some in all ages ſhall *find mercy* (*u*). And there is nothing to exclude *thee*, in thy country, ſex, age, or any of thy outward circumſtances; no, nor yet in the greatneſs of thy ſins, or long continuance in them. For *it is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jeſus Chriſt came into the world to ſave ſinners, even the chief of them* (*w*). Wherefore your way is,

3. To *apply for mercy*, and *hope for it*, upon the invitations and encouragements of the goſpel. Even a *peradventure* is looked upon to be encouragement enough to try in *other* caſes of hazard and diſtreſs; and why not in *this?* Remember the inſtance of *Benhadad*'s ſervants, and take direction from it, 1 *Kings* xx. 31, 32. *And*

(*t*) 2 Cor. ii. 11. (*u*) 2 Tim. i. 18. (*w*) 1 Tim. i. 15.

32. *And his ſervants ſaid unto him, Behold now, we have heard that the kings of the houſe of* Iſrael, *are merciful kings: let us, I pray thee, put ſackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of* Iſrael; *peradventure he will ſave thy life. So they girded ſackcloth on their loins, and put ropes on their heads, and came to the king of* Iſrael, *and ſaid, Thy ſervant* Benhadad *ſaith, I pray thee, let me live.* And the ſubmiſſion was not only accepted, and his life ſpared, but he was treated with marks of *friendſhip* and *reſpect*.

Go and do thus, O ſinner! ſubmit to mercy, without indenting and *making terms* with God. You have much *greater* encouragment to ſubmit to the *God of heaven*, than they had to the *king of* Iſrael. There was but *a bare peradventure* in that caſe. They had heard only in the general that *the kings of* Iſrael *were merciful kings*; but whether *this* king *Ahab* was of ſuch a diſpoſition, they knew not; and yet they adventured upon it to ſeek to him; but thou haſt heard that *the king of heaven is* a merciful king. He has proclaimed his name, *The Lord, the Lord God, gracious and merciful, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth* (*x*). He has *actually pardoned* thouſands

(*x*) Exod. xxxiv. 6.

ſands and millions in the like condition; and his reconciling work is not yet at an end. A gracious *Mediator* is provided to introduce you into his preſence, and to make interceſſion for you: If you will not then apply and ſeek, ſurely you deſerve to periſh.

O man, woman, whoever thou art, I muſt tell you before I leave you, Your election of God need not lie long at ſuch uncertainty with you. Yea, I may venture to tell you, it may *poſſibly* be brought to a happy concluſion at this very time, that you are of this number. I muſt repeat thoſe words of our Saviour, *John* vi. 37. *All that the Father giveth me, ſhall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.* Coming to Chriſt then is the *fruit* and *evidence* of election; and ſo this important matter may be decided by it. Now the call of Chriſt to you in the goſpel this day is, *Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your ſoul ſhall live: and I will make an everlaſting covenant with you, even the ſure mercies of* David (*y*). Come to me, O ſinner, for ſuch bleſſings as I have to beſtow on the people of God. Put your ſoul over into my hands, to be waſhed in my blood, juſtified by my righteouſneſs, ſanctified by my Spirit, and

(*y*) Iſa. lv. 3.

and preſerved by my power. Let me henceforth be your *prophet* to teach and enlighten you, your *prieſt* to atone and interceed for you, and your *king* to rule you for myſelf.——If any ſoul of you do now comply with this call; if you can make this anſwer, *Lord, I am willing to come to thee, for theſe ends and purpoſes. Thou haſt made me willing. I conſent to be thine* now *if I never did before, and take thee for my Saviour, leader, owner, and ruler for ever.*——The matter is then at this time brought to an iſſue. The ſecret decree of election *this day opens* upon you. You may now know you were firſt given to Chriſt by the Father, or you would never have been inclined and enabled thus to come to him; and henceforth you may read your *name written in the Lamb's book of life* (z).

5. The laſt uſe may be to put thoſe who have any good *ground to hope that they are of this number*, upon ſome *ſpecial* duties agreeable to their ſtate and privileges.

1. You ſhould thankfully *acknowledge and adore the riches of diſtinguiſhing grace*, eminently illuſtrated in your election. The diſciple was ſo affected with the *diſtinguiſhing* favour of heaven, to himſelf and others, as in a rapture to cry out,

(z) Rev. xxi. 27.

out, *John* xiv. 22. *Lord, how is it, that thou wilt manifeſt thyſelf to us, and not unto world!* A believer may ſay, "How is it, Lord, that thou ſhouldſt chuſe *me!* That thou ſhouldſt ſet thine everlaſting love upon *me*, when ſo many others, fallen men as well as fallen angels, are paſſed by! And ſo many of the learned, rich and honourable of the world! And this before I had any thing good in me; upon no fore-ſeen merit; nay, notwithſtanding thou ſaweſt how I ſhould diſhonour and provoke thee by my ſins! O glorious, ſovereign, and diſtinguiſhing grace! I can never enough admire it! Eternity will not be too long to praiſe thee for it!"——Peculiar favour calls for ſpecial thankfulneſs. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes: Even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight* (*a*)! Here! here! ſays one, are "thankſgivings of the moſt elevated "ſtrain in chriſtianity. They are words "to *lift up the horn* (*b*). They ſound "high in our devotions. A thankful "chriſtian raiſes his thankſgivings to the "*higheſt* notes, when he comes hereabouts. It is a melody peculiarly ac-

"ceptable

(*a*) Matt. xi. 25. (*b*) 1 Chron. xxv. 5.

" ceptable to heaven; it is the very be-
" ginning of heaven."

2. *Love him who has firſt loved you*, in ſuch a manner as may ſomething anſwer his love to you. He loved you *before you had a being*; and you ſhould love him *while you have any being (c)*. He loved you *above many others*; and you muſt love him *above all creatures*, more than *houſes and lands, brother or ſiſter, father or mother, huſband, wife, or children (d)*; or *you are not worthy of him (e)*; or of that love which he has placed upon you.

3. Always remember you are under *the higheſt obligations to holineſs and obedience*. For *ye are a choſen generation, a royal prieſthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye ſhould ſhew forth the praiſes of him, who has called you out of darkneſs into his marvellous light (f). Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long-ſuffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel againſt any; even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do ye (g)*. Do nothing to diſgrace this holy doctrine. *Be blameleſs, and harmleſs, the ſons of God, without rebuke, in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe generation, among whom ye ſhine as lights in*

(c) Pſ. cxlvi. 2. (d) Matt. xix. 29. (e) Matt. x. 37.
(f) 1 Pet. ii. 9. (g) Col. iii. 12, 13.

in the world (h). Let your watchful, exemplary, fruitful converſation, ſerve to confute them who ſay this doctrine tends to *licentiouſneſs*. Duty, gratitude and intereſt, all conſpire to make you *abound in the work of the Lord (i)*. You are favoured above others, and therefore ſhould often think on that queſtion which our Lord once put, *Matt.* v. 47. *What do ye more than others?*

4. Chearfully *acquieſce in all the dealings of God with you.* For *all* his providences are the effect of his purpoſes, and are beſt ſuited to carry on his deſign of grace concerning you. *We know*, ſays the apoſtle, in the verſe before our text, *That all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpoſe.* You are *predeſtinated*, ſays our text, *to be conformed to the image of his Son*; and your very afflictions and ſorrows are *appointed* to bring you to this conformity to Chriſt, who was himſelf *a man of ſorrows and acquainted with grief (k)*. You may reſt ſatisfied, that nothing you meet with can hinder the purpoſe of God concerning you from taking effect, but rather all things ſhall be *ſubſervient* thereunto. Therefore you may not only take the comfort of your mercies, but get above your

(h) Phil. ii. 15. (i) 1 Cor. xv. 58. (k) Iſa. liii. 3.

your afflictions, and *rejoice in tribulation (l)*. Read the believer's ſecurity and triumph, in the verſes following our text: *Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that juſtifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died, yea rather, that is riſen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who alſo maketh interceſſion for us. Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? ſhall tribulation, or diſtreſs, perſecution, or famine, or nakedneſs, or peril, or ſword? (As it is written, For thy ſake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as ſheep for the ſlaughter) Nay, in all theſe things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am perſuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.*

5. Forget not to *pray for all that belong to the election of Grace.* For thoſe that are not yet gathered. *Other ſheep* Chriſt *has, which are* not yet brought into *the fold*; pray that thoſe may *hear his voice*, and *follow him (m)*. Some of the elect are not only *uncalled*, but *unborn*: It is therefore a ſuitable petition in the liturgy

(l) 2 Cor. vii. 4. (m) John x. 16.

turgy of the *Church of England*, which we can join in, "That it may pleaſe "God of his gracious goodneſs ſhort-"ly to accompliſh the number of his "elect *."

And pray for them that are gathered and added to the church, *That they may be holy in all manner of converſation, as he who has called them is holy (n):* may *walk in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghoſt (o)*; and be *preſſing on towards (p)* perfection: may be guarded and ſafely carried through this evil world, till they joyfully enter upon the rewards of the next. *Pſal.* xxviii. 9. *Save thy people, and bleſs thine inheritance, feed them alſo, and lift them up forever.*

Once more,

6. Let the *ſecond coming and appearing of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, be the matter of your earneſt *prayer*, and object of your joyful *hope* and *expectation*. For in this day the Lord will *make up his jewels (q)*. Now Chriſt will raiſe up all that were given Him by the Father, without letting any be loſt or wanting; ſaying to his Father, "*Here I am, and the children which thou haſt given*

* See the *Burial-Office* in the Common-Prayer Book.

(n) 1 Pet. i. 15. (o) Acts ix. 31. (p) Phil. iii. 14. (q) Mal. iii. 17.

given me (r): I preſent them all together, *a glorious church, not having ſpot, or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing (s).* This will be done *with exceeding joy (t),* both on the part of the Father who choſe them, the Son who redeemed them, the Holy Spirit who ſanctified them, miniſters who were inſtrumental to gather them in, and on the part of the choſen and redeemed themſelves.

We have a pleaſant viſion of Chriſt at the head of a happy remnant, preſerved from the corruptions and carried through the perſecutions of *Antichriſt:* Read it, and then think what a glorious ſight it will be to ſee him at the head of the whole church of the elect in the great day. *Rev.* xiv. 1—5. *And I looked, and lo, a Lamb ſtood on the mount* Sion, *and with him an hundred and forty and four thouſand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: And I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they ſung as it were a new ſong before the throne, and before the four beaſts, and the elders: and no man could learn that ſong, but the hundred and forty and four thouſand, which*

(r) Heb. ii. 13. (s) Eph. v. 27. (t) Jude ver. 24.

which were redeemed from the earth. Theſe are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins: theſe are they which follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth: theſe were redeemed from among men, being the firſt fruits unto God, and the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

Thus I have been carried through *what I propoſed* on this ſubject. *Many* things which belong to it have been *omitted*; and *others* but *touched*, which I could with pleaſure have enlarged upon: but I have ſtudied *brevity*.

And now, I deſire to *bow the knee in thankſgiving to the God, and Father of ouor Lord Jeſus Chriſt* (*u*), who has given me this opportunity to bear a ſmall teſtimony to theſe important truths. I truſt I have had a ſingle aim at *his glory* in theſe diſcourſes; and ſo I look to Him, in his Son JESUS, for his gracious *acceptance* of what has been his own, and his merciful *forgiveneſs* of what has been otherwiſe: and on him I humbly depend to *ſucceed* them.

I cloſe all with the apoſtle's prayer and benediction, in 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 16, 17. *Now*

(*u*) Eph. iii. 14.

17. *Now our* LORD JESUS CHRIST *himſelf, and* GOD, *even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlaſting conſolation, and good hope, through grace, comfort your hearts, and ſtabliſh you in every good word and work.*

F I N I S.

C JY59

The Reader is deſired to correct the following Miſtakes of the Preſs:

Page 4. line 23. for προϛνμσιν, read προϛνωσιν.
Ibid line 29. for Cognoſcunter, read Cognoſcuntur.
Page 16. line 7. for Eph. iv. 1. read Eph. i. 4.
Page 17. line 7. for Sovereignity, read Sovereignty.
Page 21. line 21. for Imminent, read Immanent.
Page 42. laſt line, for 1 Tim. iii. 6. read 1 Tim. iii. 16.
Page 70. line 4. for Acts xv. 12. read Acts xv. 13.
Page 95. line 5. blot out the Interrogation after World.